December 2026 / January 2027

The Journal

Fen Drayton • Fenstanton • Hilton



The Journal on tour
On page 8

Following the Silk Road - Part 2
See page 22

The lost palace of Fenstanton
On page 30

Protecting your home from flooding
See page 72

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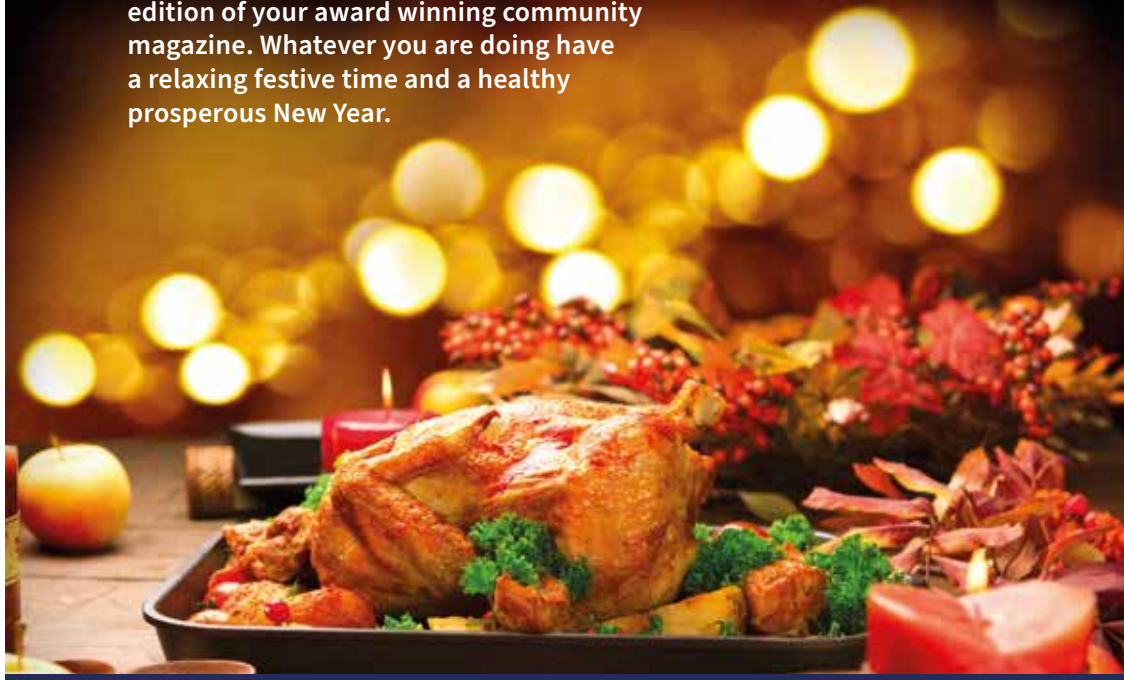
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So this is Christmas

John Lennon's Happy Christmas was recorded in 1971 but not released in the UK until 1972. In the last verse the refrain 'war is over' is a feature of his song. Unfortunately war is far from over. In fact there are now more armed conflicts, 130 globally as recognised by the International Red Cross, than there were when Lennon wrote his song. So when you sit down to your Christmas lunch spare a thought for those families that will not be enjoying a festive lunch, let alone a roof over their heads!

At The Journal we will be taking a well earned festive break and will be back in February with another edition of your award winning community magazine. Whatever you are doing have a relaxing festive time and a healthy prosperous New Year.



From all at The Journal we hope you enjoy this edition

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Please submit any copy by 8 January for the February edition.

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2.30pm

Events at a Glance

Fen Drayton Fenstanton Hilton

November 2026
28 Christmas Fair, Village Hall
28 Fenstanton Christmas Market, Clock Tower

December 2026
04–06 Christmas Tree Festival, URC
04 PTA Winter Fair, Primary School
05 Mulled wine evening organised by Parish Church
06 Christmas tree lights switch-on, Three Tuns
12 Swavesey Community Choir, Community Café
13 Parish Church Christmas lunch for charity
15 Carol Singing around Hilton
19 Christmas Crunch for children, Church Centre

January 2027
17 Family afternoon, Village Hall

February 2027
27 Parish Church Fundraising Supper, Church Centre
27 Race Night

March 2027
27 Family Easter Egg Hunt

April 2027
17 Quiz Night, Village Hall

May 2027
08-09 Fenstanton Open Gardens and Church Full of Art

June 2027
10-12 Booze in Fenstanton Pews

July 2027
03 Big Village Fun Day

If you have an event coming up that you would like to have listed on this page please send the details to Anne at **fenstanton@thejournal.life**

The Royal British Legion in Hilton

We began the annual Poppy Appeal fortnight with our fourth fundraising event in the Village Hall and again, what a success!

How can we thank everyone enough? Well we can't because so many people gave time, energy, cakes, raffle prizes and enthusiasm that to name everyone would fill this Journal. However, I know that Sue sends her very grateful thanks to every cake maker, Jan and Margaret A accepted enough raffle prizes for more than 10 hampers, to the team in the kitchen and another one that set up tables etc., and we thank the Papworth, Elsworth and Hilton choir for such beautiful singing - oh, 'Bring him home' - unforgettable. An almost touchable spirit was in the room.

Uncounted just yet, we can confidently say that the Legion gratefully thanks you all for raising at least £1,000 on the day. (Final total in February)

Now, more gratitude - to 25 or more ladies who knitted over 1,300 poppies or donated wool or funds to decorate the bridge by the lychgate and to a large group of ladies who spent days attaching them to the netting and others who installed them.





And who could forget Simon and Emma's display on the Prince of Wales?

Led by Reverend David and Pauline Zähner on Remembrance Sunday probably 100 Hiltonians or more gathered at our Lychgate Memorial to remember all who have served our nation. We were honoured to have Amy play the Last Post for the first time, Bruce and Malcolm who placed the wreaths, Ken recited the Exhortation, Peter the Kohima and in church the Brownies enacted Honour in their own special way.

So the almost touchable Hilton spirit was there again on a beautiful November morning to honour not sacrifice and loss but more importantly service, duty and love of others.

Remember - Hilton gave 11 of its men to World War One and we have been giving ever since. We are the people of an incredible village, generous in every meaning of the word, yes to the Royal British Legion but also to other vital charities.

Thank you Hilton for that spirit.

Hilton churches offertory bowls

In January 2025 a storm brought down a section of a Damson tree in the back garden of Hilton resident Mrs Margaret Shardlow. This tree was originally planted by a young George Britten in the garden of his parent's farm, the farmhouse being what is now the Village Shop and Post Office. Sometime later the Britten family moved to Park Farm in Hilton and the land and properties were sold off to enable the development of the Mill Hill End housing estate.



The Damson tree survived through all these changes, becoming a feature of Margaret's garden and remains so today. Over the years George Britten generously supported the development of Hilton and Margaret thought it would be a fitting tribute if two bowls could be made from the timber recovered. Local resident Les Booth (opposite) was asked if he could help in view of his interest in woodturning. Les took up this hobby about eight years ago and became a member of the Ely Guild of Woodturners in order to learn and improve his skills.



After a period to allow the timber to season, a design was settled on to focus the eye on the beauty of the Damson wood grain patterns in the centre of the bowls. As can be seen in the photographs, the skilfully cut curved segments of Damson wood are bordered with thin strips of mahogany to add emphasis to the swirling design. The bowls are bordered with mahogany to add dimension and rigidity. The bowls are finished in a food safe wax, chosen to maintain the appearance whilst passing through many hands over the years to come.

The photographs illustrate a stage of production as well as the appearance of the finished bowls.



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We need someone (probably active and retired) to join the team helping pack magazines ready for distribution to the amazing people who tramp the streets putting them through our letterboxes.

We'd also love to have some help in delivering to homes on an ad hoc basis if a regular volunteer is ill or on holiday. This could be for Fen Drayton, Hilton or for Fenstanton.

Are you interested in joining us?

Email circulation@thejournal.life or call Denise on 07876 446565

The Journal on tour

by Liz and Stuart Blount

Liz and myself are regular travellers to the USA, usually twice a year, April and October. We are fortunate to own a timeshare unit next door to Disneyland. However we rarely stay in our own unit as we like to experience different areas. Over the last five years or so we have spent many happy weeks in Southeast Florida visiting with many of our friends in the area.

One of the highlights is joining with friends at the local Methodist Church, called New Horizons. This sits at the wonderful address of South Flamingo Road, Southwest Ranches.



The exterior of the church

As always we are greeted by Pastor Tammie and senior stewards Ginny and Bernie like we are long lost family for which we are forever grateful. They have a fantastic congregation, all of whom want to know about the church in Hilton. We always take copies of The Journal for everybody to read, judging by the condition they end up in it seems most people enjoy it. They are genuinely surprised that the communities of Hilton, Fenstanton and Fen Drayton can produce such a great magazine.

The actual service follows generally the same lines as any other Methodist Church



Pastor Tammi with the much-travelled Journal

but does have a separate short service dedicated to the children at the beginning before they leave for Sunday School. The adult service follows on. The church has a wonderful choir that consists of around twenty to thirty who do a spectacular job of leading the singing. They are accompanied by a marvellous selection of musicians and soloist singers. The congregation is around the hundred plus in numbers all of whom make us feel extremely welcome. I think they are generally surprised that we keep turning up year after year. (They must be doing something right).

We are very fortunate that this October trip again coincides with Halloween, a great tradition in the US. The church has the most amazing Pumpkin Patch, last year they got through three articulated trucks full. This provides a much needed boost to church funds.

We were very fortunate to meet the previous Pastor, Jackie. After she left New Horizons she took up a position in the Ilford Circuit in Essex. We usually try to take in one of her services before heading to the US however due to her plan and our commitments this year it has not been possible.



This year's Pumpkin Patch at New Horizons

The IT team at New Horizons are amazing, they can almost do anything with electronic stuff, we are both novices. But they can put images up onto huge screens so that all the congregation can see everything. They also put all the services out on You-Tube, usually late afternoon in UK due to the time difference.



The altar inside New Horizons

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Hilton Feast Week

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our refreshment stall at the Hilton Fireworks Display. The Parish Council put on another spectacular display, and we were kept very busy serving refreshments throughout the evening! Your support made for a fantastic contribution to our fundraising pot, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who came along and supported us.

Dates for Your Diary – Feast Week 2027

We are already looking ahead to an extra-special Feast Week in 2027, as we celebrate our 50th anniversary!

Please make a note of the following dates:

Feast Week 2027: Sunday 25th – Saturday 31st July 2027

To help us raise the funds needed to make this milestone year truly memorable, we have some exciting fundraising events planned:

- **Saturday 27th February – Race Night**
- **Saturday 27th March (Easter Saturday) – Family Easter Egg Hunt**
- **Saturday 17th April – Quiz Night**

We would love your support at these events, so please come along, join in the fun and help us make Feast Week 2027 a 50th anniversary celebration to remember!

Keep an eye out for further details, including event information and ticket arrangements, in future editions of the Journal, on our social media channels and on Hilton's village noticeboards.

Support Your Feast Week

Our main Feast Week events rely on fundraising throughout the year, so every bit of local support really does make a difference.

One of the easiest ways to support us is by joining the Feast Week Lottery. For just £5 a month, you will be helping to keep this much-loved village tradition alive, while also having the chance to win a monthly cash prize!

We are also always grateful for volunteers and would love to hear from anyone who has memories, photographs or stories from previous Feast Weeks, particularly as we begin celebrating our 50th anniversary.

Whether you can support a fundraising event, join the lottery, volunteer your time or simply spread the word, every contribution is appreciated.

To join the lottery, find out about volunteering or share your Feast Week memories, please visit **www.feastweek.co.uk** or email **committee@feastweek.co.uk**.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. With your help, we can make Feast Week 2027 a very special celebration for the whole village!

Hilton Feast Week @hiltonfeastweek

Fenstanton cemetery memorial safety notice

Important notice regarding cemetery memorials

As part of Fenstanton Parish Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe environment within the cemetery, recent routine health and safety inspections have identified a number of headstones and memorials that have become unstable.

Where a memorial was found to present a potential safety risk, it has been carefully laid flat to prevent injury or damage until the necessary repairs can be carried out.

Many of the affected graves are older, and unfortunately the Parish Council does not always have up-to-date contact details for relatives or owners of memorials. While we have attempted to contact families where information is available, some addresses may no longer be current, and ownership of properties may have changed over the years. As a result, it has not been possible to notify everyone directly.

If you visit the cemetery and find that the memorial of a loved one has been laid down, we kindly ask that you arrange for a qualified stonemason to inspect and make the memorial safe as soon as possible.



Please contact Fenstanton Parish Council to confirm that you have seen this notice and to let us know that arrangements have been made for the necessary repairs. You can contact us on 01480 465300 or by email at clerk@fenstantonparishcouncil.org.uk.

If you have any questions, require further information, or would like to discuss an affected memorial, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to assist.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us keep the cemetery safe for all visitors.

Fenstanton Parish Council

Tubs2Pubs

Last year I collected Tubs2Pubs in Fenstanton. I'm doing it again this year! Please will you bring tubs to my house, 28 Bell Lane, Fenstanton, between 1 January and 10 February.

Thank you.
Jean Ding



Coming again to our village

Fenstanton Big Village Fun Day
Saturday 3 July 2027

Fun Day will be 50 years old, please come along and join in the Birthday celebrations!

We are already looking forward to the sun shining, excitement, fun and games on 3 July next year. The Big Village Fun Day will be back on the school field, bigger and better that ever! We are already planning to have two live Bands, a Choir, Dancers, Races, Dog Show, BBQ, Beer, Wine and Pimm's, Pub Games, Stalls, Tug Of War, Archery, Inflatable Fun, and much, much more.

Please use the long winter evenings to plan your entry into the village wide Scarecrow Competition!

Add Saturday 3 July to your diaries, we would love to see you at the Fun Day. Further details of the event, and how you can get involved in this fun event, will be posted in subsequent Journals.

The Fenstanton Big Village Fun Day Organising Committee hope that you all have a fabulous Christmas and New Year.

We would also like to thank Fenstanton Parish Councillors for wholeheartedly supporting Fenstanton Big Village Fun Day.



Fenstanton Morris will be performing on Boxing Day at 12 noon at the Clock Tower in Fenstanton, and then at 1pm at the White Swan, Conington. Happy Christmas to all, and hope to see you there!

Our local MP reports

Ian Sollom MP

Visit to Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School

I was pleased recently to visit Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School. I had an excellent tour of the building from members of the School Council, including seeing exciting plans for the school garden which is being redeveloped with the help of charity funding.

During the Q&A, pupils asked me lots of challenging questions as they always do – including what I enjoy most about working in the constituency and in Parliament. It was a pleasure to then join them all at lunch for a classic fish and chip school dinner.

Alongside this, I spoke to the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) about the work going on to make learning accessible to all. With the School's Headteacher, Richard, and Chair of Governors, Nicola, we discussed the growing challenge of providing the right support for children with SEND under tight funding restrictions.

The school recently opened its new 'Calming Cove' – a space that gives children somewhere quiet to learn techniques for regulating their emotions and managing their attention, and to then take those skills back into the classroom. The teachers I spoke to said it's had good reception from the children so far and has made a real difference to their ability to focus and learn together.

Thank you to everyone at the school for a warm welcome – I will be working hard to take concerns raised with me around SEND to the Government, and to continue to support parents and schools on this.

Fenstanton Village Hall

Huge congratulations to everyone involved in the opening of Fenstanton's new Community Hall. The space is a real testament to impressive collaboration between local government, funding partners and dedicated residents like Jane Blunt – Inaugural Chair of the Fenstanton Village Hall Trust. I look forward to seeing all the ways the community makes use of the facility for years to come.

Climate briefing

Thank you to everyone who has been in touch with me about the many screenings of the 'People's Emergency Briefing' taking place across the constituency. I am pleased to have now attended two screenings – in Bar Hill and in Little Paxton – to watch the film and discuss its contents with residents.

I came away from both evenings with genuine optimism. Seeing local residents engage seriously with both the risks and the solutions was really encouraging. And though the evidence on the risks is worrying, there are good, well-evidenced solutions available if we choose to act.



I've proudly backed the call for a prime-time national briefing across the UK, so that everyone can hear from independent experts rather than through a political filter. If you'd like to find local screenings yourself, do check the website here: www.nebriefing.org/screening-map.

ian.sollom.mp@parliament.uk



Cllr David Keane

working with your District Councillor and St. Ives County Councillor Alex Bulat

We continue to work together across party lines on issues affecting Fenstanton and Hilton, particularly highways, transport and local development.

A141 and St Ives Improvements – We have engaged with the Combined Authority and County Council through consultations and meetings with officers. Our priority remains practical solutions to congestion, safer journeys and better transport connections. We will be scrutinising the recently released outline business case, particularly proposals for improving Harrison Way.

Huntingdon Road, Fenstanton – We continue to address longstanding concerns about road conditions. Following recent vegetation clearance, our attention now turns to securing repairs to potholes and improving the road surface.

Bus Services – We are supporting improvements to local bus connections, including opportunities arising from the Combined Authority's bus franchising proposals, with particular emphasis on reliable services and better accessibility for rural communities.

Capital & Centric – We have challenged the handling of the proposed St Ives Cattle Market redevelopment, calling for greater transparency, meaningful consultation and proper consideration of residents' concerns. We will also scrutinise the recently received report and its implications for the town and surrounding villages.

Our focus remains on securing practical improvements and ensuring both villages have a strong voice in decisions affecting their future.



Nick Sarkies

District Councillor Update

Huntingdon District Council has been waiting for a firm central goverrment decision about how local government would be reorganized in Cambridgeshire, but the decision has been deferred again by the Secretary of State.

Nevertheless, the Joint Administration of HDC has been developing policies and using grants to promote a fairer, greener and stronger future for our residents. To help with the rising cost of living there is a Council Tax Support Scheme which is due to be renewed this coming month. Council Grants have helped several projects in our villages, including helping fund the new Community Hall in Fenstanton and supporting solar panels on its roof. Hilton Community Garden in Hilton has had a useful community grant to help fund refurbishment of the polytunnel.

HDC has funded the new One-Leisure facilities in Huntingdon, which will help keep our communities fitter and healthier. HDC has helped fund the new sports facilities for the Longsands community in St Neots from the Community Infrastructure Levy. As we consider our national resilience in the face of global insecurities, HDC has a new sustainable Communities and Wellbeing Fund committed to audit its impact in making our communities even better places to live.



Nic Wells

District Councillor St Ives South

I have been a Huntingdonshire resident for 45 years, my late wife and I having raised our 4 children in the District. I remarried twenty years ago and my wife and I moved from Godmanchester to our house in the centre of St. Ives 11 years ago.

I was elected as Huntingdonshire District Councillor for St Ives South ward in May 2022 and served as a member of the Liberal Democrat led administration, Chairing firstly the Corporate Governance committee and then from 2024 the Licensing committee.

I was very pleased to have been re-elected to the District Council in May this year. After the election I accepted a request from the Leader to continue as Chair of the Licensing committee.

I also continue to deliver on District Council ward work, having gained a reputation for thoroughness and commitment to see residents' issues through to a satisfactory conclusion as far as possible over the years.

I am also a St Ives Town Councillor. I was Chair of the Town Council Planning committee between November 2020 and May this year, and am currently Chair of the Town Council Resilience committee. I remain a member of the Planning committee and take an active role using my experience to scrutinise planning applications, including the large-scale developer led applications that have been lodged recently and where such planning applications are anticipated.

As a District Councillor I voted in favour of the Local Plan to 2046 progressing to inspection by the Government Planning Inspector, having satisfied myself within reason that under it, no application can proceed without demonstrating that it will not have an unacceptable impact on pre-existing local infrastructure.

I hold regular surgeries in St Ives Library on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 2-3 p.m. I am of course very happy to meet with residents face to face to discuss issues at the surgeries, or otherwise when convenient.

Cllr Nic Wells, Liberal Democrat District Councillor St Ives South nic.wells@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Fenstanton Christmas Market and Lights Switch-on

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At the Clock Tower

Lights Switch-on at 6.30pm

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The Nook – from parcels to pastries in the heart of Swavesey

If you have never visited The Nook, you're missing a bijou treat!



Nestling in Market Street in the heart of Swavesey, The Nook cafe and takeaway has occupied the former post office and its tiny sorting office for the past eight years. Some of the original furniture remains, adding a vintage touch to the cafe's character.

The Nook has become the go-to refuelling station and meeting point for local dog walkers (with pup cups for the dogs), ramblers and cyclists. Word has spread to cycling and walking groups, and passing local tradespeople often call in for a takeaway breakfast or lunch. The Nook is rated as excellent on Trip Advisor and Google with many of it's customers popping in while visiting the surrounding countryside or RSPB Fen Drayton Lakes reserve.

This tiny cafe and takeaway offers a delicious selection of hot and cold drinks, cakes from local company Herbie's Bakes, baguettes and savoury snacks, all served by the welcoming and helpful Nook team.

While seating inside is limited, pavement tables are available outside on fine days. Or savour The Nook's takeaway goodies while relaxing on the spacious village green, where the parish council has installed a range of picnic tables and benches.



Don't miss a beat, have yourself a treat and visit The Nook soon!

Opening times: 9.30 am to 2 pm, Monday to Sunday. The Nook, 5 Market Street, Swavesey, Cambridge CB24 4QG

Note from the publisher

For advertising opportunities please email info@thejournal life. Space is booked on a yearly subscription basis and runs from September 26 until August 27. Priority will always be given to local businesses. The Journal takes no responsibility for the standard of goods or services provided and accepts no liability on any loss or damage from acceptance of any advertisers.



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Saturday 16 January 2027
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Fen Drayton with Fenstanton Parish

Christmas Crunch

(Christmas crafts and lunch)

Sunday 19 December 10.30-13.30

Fenstanton Church Centre

Free children's activities, story, crafts and lunch

Activities for toddlers to teens

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Central Asia following the Silk Road - Part 2 Kazakhstan

By Sandy Monk



Almaty Waterpark

Having spent a week in Uzbekistan it was time to fly to Almaty, the old capital of Kazakhstan. The airport was very modern with many designer shops and there were a lot of security checks before boarding our flight which took about 2½ hours.

A few facts: it is the 9th largest and largest landlocked country in the world, the size of western Europe. Its border with Russia is 6,800 kilometres. It is bordered by China to the east, and to the south Kyrgystan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Its climate goes from -40°C in winter to a summer high of +40°C. Most of the country is in central Asia but the area to the west of the Caspian Sea is in eastern Europe. It holds vast mineral reserves and is a top producer of uranium. It also has huge oil reserves, coal and natural gas. It is a land of open steppe and mountains as well as deserts and inland seas. The population is about 20 million, comprising Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Germans, Russians, Uyghurs and Uzbeks. Kazakh and Russian are the two main languages spoken. The capital is Astana, renamed Nur-Sultan in 2019 after its first president, but now reverting to Astana!



We were met in Almaty by a local travel agent and driver and taken to our hotel, Kazzhol hotel, and we learnt it had been formerly the KGB headquarters. My friend's son Phil and partner Laura met us later and took us by taxi to a brand new park for families with play areas, skateboard parks, a mini race track, picnic areas, many scenic walkways with beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers where we spent some time. It was built by a waterway from the mountain river which had been constructed with weirs to make rapids and had bridges to cross over. We were taken to a Georgian restaurant well known to Phil for our dinner: toasted cheese starter and mushrooms with cheese, Char grilled chicken, Veal casserole with onions and peppers to share washed down with some good white wine. Portions were very large!



Almaty Cathedral

After breakfast we were met by Phil and Laura for our guided walking tour of Almaty. At most crossroad junctions there are zebra crossings and the cars always stopped for pedestrians so it felt very safe. The streets were planted with trees for shade and there were many green spaces. We walked to a park and stopped for coffee and snacks and then walked to the Russian Orthodox cathedral. We were able to go inside and it had many icons and was very glitzy.



Almaty Cathedral - Interior

From there we walked to the Russian war memorial with the eternal flame burning. There were many Soviet era tanks surrounding this memorial. Kazakhstan broke away from the Soviet Union in 1991 and became independent. Nearby was the Green Market, an undercover market with many stalls selling wonderful fresh fruit and vegetables, cheeses, meats etc as well as clothing. We travelled one stop on the Metro which was very beautiful with lots of marble on the floor and walls and lovely lighting. This system has one line running across the city.

We had a stop for beer and were surprised to see Cornish IPA on the menu. We also came across a Russian man who had escaped from conscription into the Russian army for the war in Ukraine and was eager to practise his English. We ended up at another restaurant known to Phil and Laura and I managed to avoid the horsemeat on the menu.

The next day we were collected from our hotel by our guide for the next three days, Rustem. He was going to take us to Charyn Canyon. He had a very comfortable car and spoke excellent English. He ran his own travel company, Almaty Pie. It took about 30 minutes on a busy dual carriageway to leave Almaty. There were very many car showrooms on the way, also "wedding palaces" and karaoke clubs. The countryside was desert steppe and grassy scrub with the snow covered Tien Shan mountains always in the distance. They were formed by tectonic plate movement and are up to 7,000-8,000 metres high.

It took three hours to reach Charyn Canyon which had been formed millennia ago from an inland sea and there is a fast flowing river at the bottom of the canyon. It was

Continued overleaf

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Charyn Canyon

2½ kilometres to the river downhill so we set off down steep steps to the canyon. The rock formations, at first in red rock, were amazing and there were information boards and seats along the way. It was extremely hot and it took about 45 minutes to reach the river. There were trees, souvenir shops and toilets at the bottom. We thought we were going to have to walk back uphill but Rustem commandeered an EV buggy to take us back. A rocky ride but very welcome. A three-course lunch of local dishes was waiting for us at the restaurant in the visitor centre. Salad with cheese and salad with beef, then cheese soup followed by stewed lamb/mutton and potato followed by dough balls with a honey yoghurt dip. There was water and also a bright green lemonade and pomegranate tea.

After lunch we set off for Kolsay Lake in the mountains. It was formed by an earthquake which blocked the water course. A beautiful drive through alpine type scenery and wildflowers everywhere and honey for sale along the way We passed through several rural villages with cows and calves ambling along the streets and a few horses too. It took 1½ hours to the lake and it was a steep climb down on wooden steps to the lake. It was very busy with tourists and there were catamarans if you wanted a boat trip. An ancient Russian minibus, with us crammed like sardines brought us back up.

That night we had a homestay in a village nearby. It was a fairly large house with several bedrooms and a large dining area, Wifi and air conditioning too. We had to leave our shoes by the door and wear plastic sandals indoors. Our bedroom had a great view of the mountains and very comfortable beds.

The lady of the house and her daughter provided a marvellous dinner: Salads, apricots and dried fruits and seeds, vegetable soup, chicken drumsticks and rice, fried vegetables – onion, cabbage, peppers and carrots. There was a plate of chocolate sweets for dessert. It was a struggle to do it justice as

Continued overleaf



Kolsay Lake

we had already had a three course meal for lunch but didn't want to offend! Early to bed after our busy day.

The next day we went to Kandy Lake. Breakfast was filling, we had seven grain porridge which was delicious and followed by an omelette. There was also a selection of dates, bread, buns and cakes. A local villager who Rustem knew picked us up in his 4WD vehicle as it was going to be a rough off road drive to the National Park. The alpine scenery was wonderful, mountains and deep blue sky and sheep everywhere. We reached a flat area to park and there were about 100 horses to hire if you didn't want to walk. We set off on foot along a stony path surrounded by trees and wildflowers. There was a fast flowing river cascading down alongside the path and there was a metal system of raised walkways and steps crossing the water. The lake was a deep turquoise and had birch tree trunks in it from when it flooded. Karyn means birch trees and there were many along the way. Unfortunately at most tourist spots there is a golden eagle on a perch with its head and eyes covered in a leather hood and it is there for tourist photos. The poor bird never gets to fly or see much and its life is being exploited by its owner for money. We sat for quite a while contemplating the lake and mountains before walking back down. We were driven back to the homestay for another sumptuous lunch: pasta and vegetable soup, beef with potatoes, coleslaw salad, seeds and dried fruits.

After lunch we packed and set off back to Almaty after stopping briefly at Black Canyon to see the rock formations and the river Charyn torrents. Another golden eagle there for photos! The drive back was 200 kms (125 miles) so a long drive for Rustem and we hit the busy, gridlocked traffic on the outskirts, arriving at the hotel at 6pm.

My last day and Rustem was picking us up at 9.30 for our Nomad Ethnic Experience. The drive was towards Bishtek mountains in Kyrgystan, about 1½ hours away. Again there was a lot of traffic congestion as people drove into Almaty for work. We passed many housing developments, an orthodox church and four mosques with golden domes. The dual carriageway that we were on had been built and paid for by the Chinese and ran from western China to Almaty for the import of Chinese goods. We saw car transporter after car transporter loaded with Chinese cars coming into the country.



Nomad Experience

It would be easy to miss the venue as it was up a rough track. The first thing we noticed were several traditional yurts and three golden eagles perched under trees and chirping away. The falconer, in national costume, was holding another eagle and hugging it. We were offered traditional snacks and fruit drinks on arrival and then taken into a yurt by the site owner's daughter who explained all about the carpets, wall hangings and the designs on them and furniture and how the yurt was erected. The wool of the cover is waterproof and insulating. It can be dismantled and erected in a very short time.

After this we were taken to sit in a stand and were treated to an amazing display of horsemanship. The five riders initially were each dressed in different types of armour from medieval times and carried swords and sabres of the period. They also were extremely accomplished archers and fired at targets while riding at speed. They were able to leap from the saddle and up again at speed. They also displayed the sport of horseback wrestling and another traditional sport where a "goat carcass", not a real one, was held under one leg and the opposition try to dislodge it and carry it off, all at speed.

After the horse displays the falconer came out with his beautiful golden eagle for flying displays. It flew over the mountains quite high up but was able to track and collect a small piece of fur as if hunting. Finally we were all given the chance to wear a gauntlet and have the eagle land on your arm and get some meat. I had a go and it was an amazing experience having this wonderful large bird land on me. It was 30 years old and weighed



Eagle

7kgs so I needed to support my arm to take the weight. It spread out its wings behind my head, looked at me as it chirped away, a magical experience.

We spoke with the owner of the site, with Rustem translating, as I was keen to learn about the welfare of the horses. The owner has many horses and so he explained that different ones are used each day and the rest of the time they are up on the mountains grazing. The golden eagles were also very well cared for and loved. A buffet lunch was offered with a variety of salads, fried aubergines, pilaf, meat pasties and delicious watermelon and honeydew melon. A very memorable experience.

We were due to go back to Almaty and go up in a cable car but there was a violent thunderstorm and torrential rain with the roads under water so this trip was cancelled. The end of my journey and a very early flight home (at 5.30 am!) via a change in Istanbul again. I have learnt so much about the two countries, their history and culture, found the people very friendly and enjoyed great hospitality.

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Hidden Water Worlds
13th February; 10am; CB24 4QG
Explore how streams, rivers and wetlands support wildlife

Nature's Colour Palette
13 March; 10am; CB24 4QG
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Bird Identification
10 April; 10am; CB24 4QG
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The Lost Palace of Fenstanton

Stantun, Stantone (11th century), Staunton, Stanton, Fennystanton (14th century), Fenny Stanton (18th century) and Fenstanton (20th century).

by John Deeks

Part 1 - Puzzlement (puzzlement is the state of confusion, bewilderment, felt when something is difficult to understand or explain):

Here in Fenstanton we have three properties calling themselves a manor. Fen Manor in Church Street which was built in the 19th century as a vicarage and remained so until fairly recently. The Manor on the Huntingdon Road is an 18th century building. For some reason it was built on farmland away from the village. The Manor House in Chequer Street was built in the 16th century.

Gertrude Peet, a local historian of the early 20th century, thought that it was possible that the Saxon Lord of Fenstanton (or Thane) may have had his manor hall on the site of The Gables on the Hilton Road. We do know that there was once a Saxon homestead there complete with a moat.

Queen Joan of Scotland had her house built where today sits Grove House. The one thing that all these buildings have in common is that they are all far away from what is believed to be the centre of the original village location.

Let's now look at what is a manor house. A manor house is defined by its historical role as the central administrative residence of a landowner (lord of the manor) on a large agricultural estate, (rather than just its size). Historically, originating in the Middle Ages, they are recognised by a *"great hall,"* surrounding farmland, and often feature stone construction, attached outbuildings (stables, barns), and sometimes, a moat or previous fortifications.

For many years I wondered why all these so called 'Manor Houses' were set away from the centre of the original village. Old field names and maps together with old documents suggest that the original village would have been set around the land to the west of the parish church and centred on the Honey Hill area. To be so far away it suggests to me that there had to have been an earlier manor house closer to the parish church. After all, a manorial hall was always the centre of village life. So, I believe that we can discount all these houses from being on the site of an original manor house.

Several archaeological digs and carbon dating have shown that the area around the village church was settled as early as 3,000BC. From Celtic, Roman and then Saxon times the centre of Fenstanton (at that time called Stantun) village life would have been the headman's hall. There the local population would have built their wattle huts grouped around a village green (probably Honey Hill Green) and the headman's hall.

To give an idea of the size of Stanton in those early times we can refer to the Domesday Book which was compiled for King William I in 1086. *"In Stanton there were twenty-four villagers, eight smallholders and a priest"*. The survey only counted the men so we have to add another twenty-four women and probably some fifty-children. A total population of around one hundred and seven people.



For illustration only

What dry land there was around Stantun was heavily wooded, mostly oak trees. It formed part of the great forest of Huntingdonshire and it was known as the 'Happy Hunting ground' by the elite. The Saxon lords or Thanes would not have lived permanently in Stanton but probably used it as a hunting box. So, a fairly basic wooden built hall would have been fit for purpose.

This would have remained so throughout the Saxon perioduntil the advent of the Norman conquest. Once the Norman lord (Gilbert of Ghent) had been given the manor of Stantonby William the Conqueror, the small Saxon Hall would not have been considered adequate for such an important man.

So where was the small Saxon village of Stanton situated and where would the hall have been placed? At that time the Christian faith was the centre of everyday life for the people of Stanton. The Saxons would have built their first wooden church building close to the hall. This hall, and church would have been burned down by the Viking invaders, rebuilt and burned down a number of times. It was only in the late 11th century that the wooden church was replaced by a stone building and this would have been built on the site of the present-day parish church.

The church and the immediate surrounding lands are the first high ground up from the river and the fens. It would have dominated everything that went on and by the river. The Norman church, gleaming white, would have been visible for miles around the local fenland. Gilbert of Ghent would have placed his new manor house next to the church possibly on the site of the Old Saxon Hall.

The picture on the left (below) is an illustration of a 11th century Norman Manor House. In the 13th century a larger more sophisticated hall would have been built (second picture). It would have been constructed of brick (produced from local clay) and wood together with a moat for defence but also to emphasise the Lord's status.

King William 1 had granted Gilbert of Ghent all the manors previously owned by the Saxon lord, Ulf Fenman who fell at the battle of Hastings. These included Fen Drayton, Papworth St Agnes, Papworth Everard, Swavesey, Boxworth, Conington and Elsworth. However, Fenstanton was known as the Chief Manor. Miss Peet wrote, "Hence as Fenstanton is the chief manor above the Cambridge manors, Gilbert would reside there. He probably used Fenstanton as one of his hunting boxes. For several centuries at this period Huntingdonshire was called, *"the happy hunting ground of kings. It was famous for falconry, deer and boar hunting and fishing"*.

The Norman lords of the manor of Stanton did not live permanently here in the village and the early medieval hall would not have been their permanent home. Rather it would have been a 'nice' place' for their steward to live in, but with luxury apartments just in case the lord came by. But where was this medieval building situated? This is when I spent two years of my life researching and asking questions about this lost building.

To be continued.





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Afoot in the Garden



Here comes the rain and the wind



After the first rain following the drought of 2026, I was so joyed to see my first worm in several months! Such is the lot of a gardener to be thrilled by a little wriggly creature. But for sure, worms are the apex eaters of organic material and crucial to a healthy soil. Worms dig deep into the soil to survive a drought and this autumn our lawns have few worm casts? (Help the worms and mulch your soil!).

A recent storm (in mid-October) brought down a double stemmed ash tree in my local park. It was cleared away quickly enough leaving the trunks 4 foot high and many a thick root settled on the rough grass. The internal wood showed no signs of fungal infection and the main roots were sound enough! The tree surgeons were of the opinion that the minor roots must have been weekend by the drought. It's possible the full effects of the summer of 2026 on plants root systems will not become apparent until spring 2027. If the middle of your trees and shrubs leaves show yellowing or browning when they come into leaf next year, it could be root damage. My advice, Hard prune followed by a good mulch might just help them to survive.

On a dry day a general prune and tidy can help to keep the garden looking neat. Nothing is nothing quite like a few hours pruning and trimming in the garden followed by a warming coffee or chocolate, maybe even laced with a generous dash of rum or brandy. Prune trees, shrubs, roses and climbers and trim selected perennials and grasses. In January trim off the bronzed leaved of much underused epimediums so you can see the fairy flower spikes in early spring. It's been a late autumn and I suspect flowering bulbs might well be on sale in garden centres so look out for a bargain, It is still ok to plant bulbs this late in the year.



December Top Tips

- Prune and Trim trees shrubs and roses
- Take Hardwood cuttings of shrubs
- Organise lawnmower maintenance
- Feed the worms by mulching
- Isolate/wrap outside taps

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Friday 4 Dec	1:00pm - 4:00pm
Saturday 5 Dec	10:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday 6 Dec	11:00am - 2:00pm

Donations at the door for Arthur Rank Hospice/Church

At 11.00am -11.45am on Saturday the St Ives Musical Theatre Choir will be singing Christmas songs.

If you would like to enter a decorated tree into this, please let me know. Any shape, size or theme.

Jean Ding - jeanelizabethding@gmail.com

Memorial Garden refurbishment ahead of Remembrance Sunday



Fenstanton Parish Council is pleased to report that the Memorial Garden has been refurbished in readiness for this year's Remembrance Sunday service. We would like to thank Naturespace for carrying out the improvement works, a local parishioner who kindly refurbished the memorial cross and charged only for materials, and Keith Collier for his valuable help and support. This project is a wonderful example of community spirit and has helped ensure the Memorial Garden remains a fitting place for reflection and remembrance.

A heartfelt Thank You

Fenstanton Parish Council would like to extend its sincere thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their time in the early hours of 11 November to help bring our village Christmas tree to life.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who assisted with the delivery, erection and decorating of the tree, helping to create a festive focal point for the whole community to enjoy throughout the festive season.

Special thanks also go to those who generously lent equipment and provided practical support, without which this project would not have been possible. Your willingness to help, share resources and work together demonstrates the wonderful community spirit that makes Fenstanton such a special place. Your hard work, dedication and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated, and we thank each and every one of you for helping make this year's village Christmas tree a success.

With grateful thanks,

Fenstanton Parish Council





Pond maintenance



Fenstanton Parish Council has recently arranged for the annual winter maintenance of the village pond to be carried out in preparation for the colder months ahead. This important work helps to keep the pond healthy and attractive, ensures it remains a valuable habitat for local wildlife, and reduces the build-up of vegetation and debris over the winter period. Regular maintenance is essential to preserving this much-loved village feature, and the Parish Council is pleased that the work has been completed ahead of the winter season. We would like to thank all those involved in helping to care for and protect this important community asset for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Councillor Surgeries

The last Saturday of the month 10.00 – 12.00pm
The Hub, Community Hall, Crest Drive, Fenstanton PE28 9BR

27.01.2027	Anne Mustill	Hayley Howatt

Pop in for a chat with Councillors. Whether you have concerns to raise or ideas to improve our village, we'd love to hear from you!
The councillors attending the surgery can be changed and we will inform you of any changes.
Let's work together to make Fenstanton even better.

Next Parish Council meetings

Parish Council meetings are usually held on the second Thursday of each month (except in August and December unless required) at the Church Centre, School Lane, Fenstanton. PE28 9JR. Please note that dates may occasionally change due to unforeseen circumstances, and extraordinary meetings may also be called if urgent business needs to be discussed.

In addition to our regular meetings, we also hold:

- Planning Committee meetings (when applications are submitted)
- Finance & Constitution Committee meetings
- General Purposes Committee meetings
- Burial Board meetings

Details of all upcoming meetings, along with agendas and minutes from previous meetings, can be found on the Parish Council website -**www.fenstantonparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Date	Meeting	Time and Location
Thursday 12 January 2027	PC Ordinary	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday 28 January 2027	General Purposes	7.00 pm Church Centre

To contact your Parish Council Clerk Telephone: 01480 465300,
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Continued overleaf

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Fancy making a positive difference in your community?

Fenstanton Parish Council is looking for enthusiastic, community-minded residents to join us as Parish Councillors.

We currently have **three vacancies available for co-option**, offering a fantastic opportunity to help shape the future of our village, represent residents, and support projects that make Fenstanton an even better place to live.

Interested but not sure what's involved? No problem. We'd be delighted to have an informal chat and answer any questions you may have about the role and what being a councillor entails.

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Hilton History - Olive Stokes' Files

Hilton villagers who have lived here for some years may remember Olive Stokes (1913-2010) who lived in Kidman's Farm Cottage on Graveley Way, and was an active participant in many aspects of village life.



Her great interest in the village extended to her compilation of 'scrapbooks'. She read the local newspapers (The Hunts Post, Town Crier and Cambridge Evening News) and cut out any article that was of relevance to the people of Hilton. Each was assigned to one of four files, with some of the smaller pieces pasted onto sheets of paper, others had holes punched so they could be added directly to the file. Sometimes dates and comments have been added to the articles.

Other material was added to the files including photographs, old postcards, posters, programmes, maps, fliers, sales documents and catalogues. Most of the material relates to the period 1980-2001.

The four files have the following titles:

Village views, Hilton

Maze, Village Hall, Cricket Pavilion

Houses for sale, Hilton

Personalities

In 2007 some of the information from these files was digitised and can now be found online in the Hilton Village Archive **https://www.hilton-village.com/index.php/village-digital-archive.**

These files provide much useful and interesting information on the village in the late twentieth century. However they are not catalogued, there is no index. They have been well used, and frequently handled, and in places are quite fragile, but for anyone studying the village in the past, they are a valued source of information.

The usual local archives are not interested in taking these files as they contain much material that can be found in newspaper archives elsewhere.

Hilton Methodist Church has offered to hold the files in order to keep them in the village. They can be borrowed from the church by e-mailing **Malcolm Lynn at malcolm2lynn@gmail.com.**

The Three Tuns
Fen Drayton

✨ FEN DRAYTON CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHT SWITCH-ON ✨

Pop Friday 6th December in your diary and join us for a magical evening of festive fun

From 6pm, keep your eyes peeled as Father Christmas and his favourite reindeer make their way through the streets of Fen Drayton on a motorised sleigh, jingling all the way as they spread Christmas cheer. Don't forget to leave out a mince pie... and we've heard Father Christmas is partial to a little whisky too! 🥃🎅

Once he's completed his festive tour, Father Christmas will arrive outside The Three Tuns to officially switch on the village Christmas tree lights.

We'll also be joined by the wonderful Swavesey Community Choir, performing festive favourites from 6pm, while our outdoor tent serves up warming mulled wine and hot chocolate in the car park. 🍥🍷

Then, as the carols come to an end, head inside for our popular Sunday Night Acoustic Session, featuring live music from Marc Hughes, singer and guitarist. 🎸🎶

It's the perfect way to kick off the Christmas season with friends, family and the local community.

DEC
6 Sunday, From 6pm



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Our final session this term will be on 07 December with a talk on the **Rise, Fall and Renaissance of Trams in the UK**, with a local speaker, Ray Bowers, starting at 10:30am.



Our programme for 2027 starts with a session on Zoom on 11 January at 10:00, finishing at midday, when Sarah Anthony will give a talk on **The Whitechapel Murders**.

Our programme will continue on Zoom with a course on **The City of Berlin: fear, division and unity** led by Simon Gregor, over four sessions, which will start at 10:30 am (finishing at 12.10) on Monday, 18 January.



All are welcome, there are no membership requirements or qualifications required. All sessions are £6 per week and for 2027 bookings on zoom places must be booked in advance.

If you would like to find out more or you would like Zoom access details, please contact Maggie on **huntingdonlifelonglearners@gmail.com** or look at our webpage **www.call-ed.org.uk/groups/huntingdon/** where course details are posted as soon as they are available.

Coffee, Cake & Church

Welcome

Come in and grab a cuppa

brought to you by Hilton Parish Church

It's church, but not as you know it....

Sunday 22 Nov
Sunday 24 Jan
Sunday 28 Feb

and every 4th Sunday, (excluding Dec)

11.15am HILTON VILLAGE HALL

A welcome for all, good coffee, delicious cakes, crafts & activities, time to talk, music and prayer

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Revd David Busk on 436400
or Rachel Wood on 830866

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Our events provide welcoming places to hear expert lecturers share their specialist knowledge about the arts. Our members contribute to and preserve our artistic heritage through volunteering and grants. Our work creates a better, healthier and more connected society.

Forthcoming lecture:

Wednesday 9 December at 2:30pm "Renoir and the Development of the Impressionist Portrait" Speaker: Martin Heard

Wednesday 13 January at 2:30pm "Joseph Wright of Derby and the Lunar Society" Speaker: Chris Owen

SAVE THE DATE!

FEN DRAYTON

Community Café

Saturday December 12th

NEW TIME ➡ 1030 – 1300

SOUP LUNCHES



Swavesey Community Choir

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Hilton Parish Church

Dear Friends,

Candles. Prayers. Emotive singing. Large gatherings. Stirring addresses. Public illuminations. Acts of kindness and generosity. Special messages and greetings. I could be describing some of the trappings of Christmas. But this could also be a description of the way people sometimes respond to a public tragedy.

People congregate in some public place, light candles, listen to speeches, maybe sing. Christmas is a story of hope, but the hope comes in a setting of fear, vulnerability, and surrounding darkness – Jesus is conceived in a way that could have caused scandal, is born in a stable, and has to flee with his family as a refugee in fear of his life. And when some horrific event brings people together to commemorate it and to grieve together, there is often also a renewed commitment to finding our shared humanity, and there can even be expressions of hope or reconciliation from the bereaved. So strangely, Christmas, our most extravagant expression of festivity, shares some features with how we respond to disaster. There is the reality of a dark backdrop to the Christmas story, and after a calamity there can be the possibility of finding hope in the midst of horror. Is this because Christmas isn't after all a frivolous escape from reality, but can actually be a way of understanding better that reality, which contains both joy and sorrow?

One phrase keeps coming back to me: 'Fear not.' It appears like a refrain throughout the Bible, and in the Christmas story itself. Mary when she learns she is to bear Jesus, Joseph when he learns Mary is pregnant, the shepherds when the angels approach, all are told not to be afraid. The supreme good news comes in disguise, as something that looks frightening at first. But being told not to be afraid doesn't sound like a solution. 'Fine,' one might reply, 'but how exactly am I to lose my fear?' The words themselves do go some way to calming us. They are what we say to frightened children. But the thing that really dispels fear is taking some kind of compassionate or creative action. Fear often pushes people apart, makes others seem threatening or unwelcome. Actions that take us closer to people rather than further away dispel fear, both in those who do them and those who receive them. 'Perfect love drives out fear.' (1 John 4:18) The secret then is to act in love. That is why the Christmas angels say, 'Fear not.' Perfect love is coming in to the world. May we act always in His name, and proclaim His peace. Fear not. Love extravagantly. Live generously. Happy Christmas!

With love,
David

Services in December

Sunday 6 December	8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)
Sunday 13 December	11:15am United Gift Service at the Methodist Church
Sunday 20 December	8:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 20 December	5:00pm Carol Service at the Methodist Church
Thursday 24 December	4:00pm Nativity Service
Friday 25 December	8:00am Christmas Communion
Sunday 27 December	No service at the Parish Church

Services in January

Sunday 3 January	8:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 10 January	11:15am United Covenant Service at the Methodist Church
Friday 15 January	5:30pm – 7:00pm Christingle
Sunday 17 January	8:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 24 January	11:15am Coffee, Cake and Church in the Village Hall
Sunday 31 January	8:00am Holy Communion

Weekly Online Services (Via Zoom) - contact David Busk (01480 436400) for Zoom access details
Holy Communion – Wednesdays (2.00pm) Bible study – Fridays (10:00am)

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Route H9 – 2nd Tuesday In The Month

Fen Drayton Primary School	2.30pm – 3.30pm
Fen Drayton War Memorial	3.40pm – 4.10pm

Route H11 – 2nd Thursday In The Month

Hilton Village Hall	2.00pm – 2.40pm
Fenstanton Headlands	2.50pm – 3.40pm
Fenstanton Chapel Green	3.50pm – 4.20pm

Route H25 – 4th Thursday In The Month

Fenstanton Chapel Green	9.30am – 10.00am
Fenstanton Headlands	10.10am – 10.45am

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St Mary's Fen Drayton St Peter and St Paul, Fenstanton

We wish you a joy filled Christmas and a New Year full of hope.



Please note – services in St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Fenstanton are live streamed where possible, details via https://www.fenchurchbooking.org.uk

Do contact us if you would like the Zoom links for Morning Prayer.

December 2026 January 2027 – SERVICES AND EVENTS

Thursday 3	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 6 Advent 2	10.30am Fenstanton 4pm Fenstanton	Holy Communion with *Sunday Club* Christingle Service. All welcome
Thursday 10	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 13 Advent 3	9.15am Fen Drayton 10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion – St Mary's Worship For All – Giving a Gift Service Followed by *Christmas Lunch*
Monday 14	5pm Fenstanton 7.30pm Fenstanton	Fenstanton & Hilton School Community Carol Service. All Welcome A Pause in the Month
Thursday 17	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Friday 18	6-8.30pm	Fen Youth Carol singing, meet at parish church
Saturday 19	10.30am-1.30pm	Christmas Crunch, Fenstanton Church Centre
Sunday 20 Advent 4	10.30am Fenstanton 5pm Fenstanton 6pm Fen Drayton	Holy Communion Traditional Carol Service with choir Crib & Carols Service at St Mary's
Thursday 24 Christmas Eve	8.30am on Zoom 4pm Fenstanton 11.30pm Fenstanton	Morning Prayer Crib & Carols Service First Communion of Christmas
Friday 25 Christmas Day	10am Fen Drayton 10am Fenstanton	Christmas Day Holy Communion at St Mary's Christmas Day Family Service (no communion)
Sunday 27	10.30am Fenstanton	Parish Holy Communion, last service with Rev Rosie

January 2027 SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sunday 3	10.30am	Epiphany Holy Communion
Thursday 7	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 10	9.15am *Fen Drayton Village hall*	Holy Communion – Baptism of Christ
Sunday 10	10.30am	Worship For All
Thursday 14	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Friday 15		Fen Youth trip to Pantomime
Sunday 17	10.30am	Holy Communion with *Sunday Club*
Thursday 21	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 24	9.15am *Fen Drayton Village hall* 9.30am *Fenstanton*	Morning Praise Service at Fenstanton URC*
Thursday 28	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 31	10.30am Fenstanton	Parish Holy Communion-Feast of Candlemas

St Mary's Fen Drayton* Please note from the table above our January services for Fen Drayton will take place in the warmth of the village hall. All welcome to join us, same time 09.15 on Sunday 10th and Sunday 24th. Coffee afterwards.*

Lots of special events and services in the coming weeks

All are welcome to join us on Sunday 6 December at 4pm in the parish church, Fenstanton for our family friendly Christingle service. This service brings awareness of the work of The Children's Society and raises funds for them, as well as the fun of making our own Christingles. We will have plenty of oranges, sweets and candles.





On Sunday 13 December at 10.30am we have our annual Giving a Gift Service, in the parish church. This is an opportunity to bring an unwrapped gift for a child for Cambridgeshire County Council to distribute to those in need. They are asking particularly for gifts for older children aged 12+ and teenagers. Please do give if you can. The Giving a Gift Service is followed by our Christmas Lunch, raising funds for our charity of the year, Hands at Work, Africa. This will also be our final lunch with Rev Rosie in post as Rector. Tickets just £12.50 for adults, £6 for children. More information available from Ian Hucklesby, Churchwarden.

On Monday 14 December at 5pm, all are welcome to come along to the Fenstanton & Hilton School Community Carol Service at 5pm in the parish church.



Accessibility in our churches: The Parish Church (Fenstanton) has a ramp which can be deployed upon request. There is a toilet, with wheelchair access. St Mary's (Fen Drayton) has a small threshold that may be possible to navigate with a wheelchair. There are no toilet facilities. Although we have fixed pews in both churches there are plenty of spaces available for wheelchairs, prams and buggies.

Rector until December 31st: Rev Rosie Tallowin: 01480 467393 Email: vicar@fenchurches.org.uk. Then all enquiries to our Churchwardens please: Ian Hucklesby 07850 470085 Lynn Beecroft 07803 712021 email: churchwardens@fenchurches.org

Continued overleaf

Friends of St Mary's, Fen Drayton Church.



A thank you to Roger Robinson, our inaugural chairman.

As a newcomer to Fen Drayton and being intrigued by the seemingly semi-redundant ancient church of St Mary, I found myself at a meeting discussing its future in the Village Hall on the evening of Tuesday 3 March. There was an encouragingly good turn-out of people concerned about this structurally threatened church which is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register.

The idea of forming a Friend's Group emerged that would co-ordinate efforts to raise the funds necessary to safeguard the building and ensure its continuing primary community purpose as a place of worship. Fen Drayton needs its church! A gentleman present promptly offered his services to chair such a group. Barely minutes later, with the progress of populating his committee clearly not proceeding at sufficient pace, our inaugural chairman stated graciously yet forcefully, that if there were insufficient people willing to commit to joining him in the enterprise, he would withdraw his offer! As much amused as surprised, I raised my hand in an instant as did several others. "I'm not missing the chance of serving with this man" I thought, "he clearly gets things done and this could be fun"!

Roger Robinson's dedication and experience have been evident at our subsequent Friend's Group meetings – his insistence on clarifying and resolving each item in a meeting lest it become a 'loose end' have been a lesson to me. He has galvanised us all into a committee of common purpose and effectiveness and his example has set us on the path to conserving Fen Drayton's beloved little church. As Roger now stands down with his task complete, we thank him for his inspiration and thank Edie too for hosting our meetings in their home. Our venue now will be, fittingly, in St Mary's itself.

Mark Prina

Join us for Advent & Christmas at the Churches of Hilton

Wednesday 2, 9 & 16 December

12.30 pm: Advent lunch (see advert for details)

Tuesday 15 December

6.00 pm: Village carol singing (meet at Parish Church)

Sunday 20 December

5.00 pm: United carol service in the Methodist Church

Christmas Eve

4.00 pm: Nativity service in the parish Church

11.30 pm: Midnight communion service in the Methodist church

Christmas Day

8.00 am: Holy communion in the Parish Church

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East Anglia's Children's Hospices

Coffee Mornings at Hilton Methodist Hall, Potton Road

Saturday, 5 December	10:00 - 12:00
Saturday, 2 January	10:00 - 12:00
Saturday, 6 February	10:00 - 12:00

Come and Join Us for a Coffee and a Chat!
Everyone Welcome

Introducing Revd Frankie Stead – New Curate for Godmanchester and Hilton



Hello – my name is Frankie Stead and I was ordained Deacon at Ely Cathedral in July this year and since then I have been curate for the Parishes of Godmanchester and Hilton. I will be with you for the next three years as I continue my training, so I thought now would be a good time to introduce myself so you can get to know a little bit more about me.

I live out in Spaldwick, and am a self-supporting minister, and am a part time curate, meaning I work two days a week and Sundays. Before I started training for ordained ministry in the Church of England, I worked as a research scientist, first in academia and later in industry, where I worked on a wide range of projects as a geneticist. I retired from paid employment in 2018, which gave me this wonderful opportunity to move into studying for ordained ministry and a whole new adventure in my faith. Prior to coming to Godmanchester, I attended church in the Parish of East Leightonstone, where I was an Authorised Lay Minister (ALM) in both worship leading and pastoral care. Before that, I was active in other churches where I was living especially in leading worship through music, which is another of my passions.

One thing that you need to know about me, is that, as I age, I am losing my hearing. I do wear hearing aids but if you are talking to me in a noisy environment, you will notice that I watch your mouth a lot, as I rely on lip reading. Even then, I will mis-hear and ask you to repeat things a lot. Please bear with me – I am doing my best!

I am married to Bob, and we have a daughter, who lives locally with her family. As a result we spend a lot of time helping with our two granddaughters, who are both in primary school. As I mentioned, music is one of my passions and as well as music in church, I play guitar and sing at various folk groups and clubs.

Over the past few months I have been slowly getting to know people in the parishes as I meet you all. I look forward to meeting more of you and getting to know as many people as possible. If you haven't met me yet and you see me either at Hilton Parish Church, at the Methodist Church or walking around the village, please do introduce yourself and say "Hello". I would also like to take this opportunity thank you all for making me so welcome. I have really enjoyed my first few months with you all and am looking forward to seeing where God takes all of us together.

Blessings

Revd Frankie Stead

Hilton **Methodist** Church

Highlights in December…at your local Methodist Church

We extend a very warm welcome to you all to our services in December at The Methodist Church in Hilton.

In early December, we will be hosting the united Gift Service on 13 December, 2026, at 11.15, where despite the name, we no longer collect toys but instead collect monetary gifts for work with children organised by "Action for Children". This charity which focusses on children and families in need developed out of the National Children's Home which was set up by a Methodist minister, Rev Dr Thomas Bowman Stepehenson in 1869.

On 20 December, at 5pm. we will be holding our annual, ecumenical Carol Service and would be delighted if you were able to join us, our Anglican friends and friends from other Christian churches for a traditional, village carol service of lessons and carols at the Methodist Church. The service will be followed by mince pies and tea or coffee in the church hall. Donations are invited for the Young Carers in St Ives.



On Christmas Eve, our service is at 11.30 p.m. and will be led by Rev James Bamber. All are welcome to join us at that service.

Elsewhere in "The Journal", you'll see the adverts for our coffee morning on 5 December, Carols around the Village on 15 December where we are collecting for "Christian Aid" and the ecumenical advent lunches at which are collecting for the local Macmillan Woodlands Centre. Do come and join us if you can.

Finally, from all at the Methodist Church, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rev Lembe Sivile
Minister of Hilton Methodist Church
Lembe.sivile@methodist.org.uk
Mobile: 07483 154590

Services in December and January

6 December	10:00am	Rev. Lembe Sivile
13 December	11:15am	United Gift Service in the Methodist Church
20 December	10:00am	Ms. Viv Almond
20 December	5:00pm	Carol Service
24 December	11:30pm	Midnight Communion Service
27 December	No service at the Methodist Church	
3 January	10:00am	Mrs. Leonore Charlton
10 January	11:15 am	United Covenant Service in the Methodist Church
17 January	10:00am	Mrs. Elizabeth Stockdale
19 January	2:30pm	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Zoom *
24 January	10:00am	Mrs. Katy Salmon
31 January	10:00am	Dr. David Ward

Phone 01480 494014 for Zoom access details

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The United Reformed Church
www.urc.org.uk

Fenstanton United Reformed Church

Chequer Street, Fenstanton
Minister Revd Alison Davis

Sunday morning services are at 09.30. All are welcome.

2026/2027 Services

December

06 Led by the Elders
13 Revd Christine Davies - Holy Communion
20 Revd Alison Davis
Christmas Day, Friday 25 - Revd Alison Davis 9.30am
27 Led by the Elders

January

03 Revd Christine Davies
10 Led by Richard Lewney
17 Revd Alison Davis - Holy Communion
24 Revd Alison Davis
31 Revd Christine Davies

Meditation – Led by the Free Church St. Ives

Tuesday 8 December 2.30 - 4pm - Led by John Williams
Tuesday 12 January 2.30 - 4pm - Led by John Williams

Geoff Hawkins Fenstanton URC Secretary
fenstantonurc@stivesfreechurch.org

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Fenstanton United Reformed Church

"Are you ready yet?", a question asked by children playing hide and seek or some other game, or by adults and parents when going out or waiting for a partner or friend.

It can also be asked as Christmas approaches, "are you ready yet?" may speak of all the practical preparations that are made for the Christmas season, buying and wrapping presents, purchasing food and drink, working out the logistics of family gatherings. For many December passes in a blur of preparation and busyness, so that it gets forgotten that Christmas is about the greatest gift ever given – LOVE – God's love seen in Jesus Christ, the babe born in Bethlehem. The season of Advent (29 November - 24 December) is there to help us prepare and to remember the reason for the season. Your advent calendar/candle helps here too – a visible reminder of the love that is born into the world at Christmas.



For some, Christmas can be a difficult time due to bereavement or family breakdown, for instance, however the love that comes at Christmas is for everyone, whether we feel like celebrating or not.

Whatever our emotions and feelings about Christmas, the words of a poem first published in 1885 by Christine Rosetti are powerful.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

I wish you a merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year

Revd Alison Davis, URC Minister

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Chocolate and apricot pud with glossy chocolate sauce

Some folk don't like the traditional Christmas pudding and this is a good alternative. This recipe serves 6-8 people.



Ingredients:

8oz (200gm)	Ready-to-eat dried apricots
4tbsp	Brandy
4oz (100gm)	Ground almonds
1oz (25gm)	Cocoa powder
4oz (100gm)	Self-raising flour
1 tsp	Baking powder
4oz (100gm)	Softened butter
5oz (140gm)	Light muscovado sugar
2	Eggs beaten
4tbsp	Milk
4oz (100gm)	Dark chocolate, chopped into large chunks
2tbsp	Clear honey

Cream or vanilla ice cream to serve

For the sauce

4oz (100gm)	Dark chocolate
284ml carton	Double cream
1-2tbsp	Brandy (optional)

Method:

Butter a 2pint (1.2litre) pudding basin and put a circle of greaseproof paper in the base. Put the apricots in a small pan and add the brandy. Bring slowly to the boil, then simmer, turning the apricots occasionally until all of the brandy has soaked in. Leave until cool enough to handle.

Tip the ground almonds into a bowl, then sift over the cocoa, flour and baking powder and mix everything together.

In another bowl, beat the butter and sugar together for 2-3 mins until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs and milk.

Chop half the apricots into small pieces. Lightly stir the flour mix into the butter mix, followed by the chopped apricots and chocolate.

Put the remaining whole apricots into the pudding basin and spoon over the honey. Add the pudding mixture and smooth the top. Cover with double thickness buttered greaseproof paper and tie down. Trim off the excess paper, then overwrap in foil, tucking the ends under the edges of the paper.

Put the basin into a large pan and pour boiling water into the pan, to come halfway up the sides of the basin. Cover and steam for 2 1/2 hours until it feels firm. The pudding can be made, to this stage up to 2 days ahead. Reheat by steaming for 1 hour, or microwave on medium for 6-8 mins.

Towards the end of the cooking time, make the sauce. Break up the chocolate and put in a small pan with the cream and brandy, if using. Warm gently, stirring lightly until smooth and glossy.

Cool the pudding in the bowl for 10 mins, then turn out and serve with the chocolate sauce and cream or vanilla ice cream. At this point the chatter should noticeably die down.

update

FEN DRAYTON
Parish Council

Contact:
email: fendrayton.clerk@gmail.com
website: www.fendrayton.org
post: PO Box 1102, Fen Drayton, Cambridge CB24 4WZ

Cafe news update

At the cafe's Macmillan Coffee Morning in September, £215.73 was raised from generous donations and the sale of hot drinks and cake. The cafe trustees have agreed to donate £250.00 to Macmillan.

Swavesey Community Choir

We're delighted that, once again, the choir will visit the December cafe. So, if you would like to join in some singing and get in the festive mood, come along on **Saturday 12 December**. Service is from 10.30 until 1 pm from December to February, when the cafe will be serving warming soup lunches.

Flood preparations

At the October meeting the parish council discussed flooding and flood preparations in the light of warnings about heavy rainfall. The county council will be reviewing flood planning, but urges individual households to consider how they can prepare themselves too. Households that still have flood sacks should make sure they are intact and



close at hand in the event of flooding. For more information go to the CCC website: https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water

Dog poo

The problem of dog poo on public footpaths has been highlighted again. If you are a dog owner please pick up after your dog – it is your responsibility. Not only is it extremely unpleasant to remove from shoes, but it also poses a health risk. There are abundant bins around the village including dedicated dog waste bins. All bins are emptied weekly.



Christmas lights switch on

The Christmas tree lights will be switched on at 6 pm on Sunday 6 December. Come along to see Santa and his reindeer and keep warm with a mulled wine (or tipple of your choice) at the Three Tuns.

Clothing bank

If you use the clothes bank by the village hall, please don't leave bags on the ground next to it. And if it is full, please ring the number on the bank, which will then be emptied as soon as possible.

Articles of broken furniture have also been dumped by the bank. We take pride in our village, so please dispose of unwanted items in the usual way via black bin waste collections or taking them the waste recycling centre at Bluntisham.

District councillor, Vivien Biggs

Do I Need Planning Permission?
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has launched a free online tool giving tailored guidance, including whether your property is listed or in a conservation area.

It's for guidance only and isn't an official decision but could be very helpful for residents, who are encouraged to try it at www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/check-if-i-need-planning-permission.

The Big Conversation on Care
This consultation is still ongoing and it is important that as many people as possible take part!

You are invited to share your views on adult social care and help shape the future of care. Find out more here: http://caseycommission.co.uk/bigconversation/

National Careers Service Update
As some of you will know, for a time in my career I worked as a careers adviser, so I am always interested in how such services are being delivered.

On 1 October, the National Careers Service in England was brought in-house to the Department for Work and Pensions to provide a more joined-up service for people at every stage of their career.

Free, impartial careers information, advice and guidance will continue to be provided by qualified careers advisers through telephone, digital and face-to-face channels. The number to call is 0800 072 0288. The National Careers Service website has been renamed 'Get careers information and advice'.

Wishing everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and new year!

If you wish to contact me about the above, or any other matters, please email me at: Cllr.Biggs@scambs.gov.uk

Councillors' full reports

County and district councillors, Chris Poulton's and Vivien Biggs's latest reports can be viewed at www.fendrayton.org

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When family life changes, Leeds Day is here to help

Separating from a partner can feel overwhelming. There may be worries about where everyone will live, how finances will be managed and what arrangements should be made for the children. It can be difficult to know where to start.

The Family Team at Leeds Day LLP offers friendly, practical advice to help people understand their options and decide what to do next. Every family is different, so the team takes time to listen, explain the law in plain English and find an approach that suits each client's circumstances.

Divorce, separation and finances

When a relationship ends, important decisions often need to be made about the family home, savings, pensions, investments and income. Leeds Day's family solicitors can help clients work towards a fair financial settlement, whether through direct discussions, mediation, collaborative law or negotiations between solicitors.

Where a family business or private company is involved, matters can be more complicated. The team has considerable experience of helping business owners and their families deal with issues such as business values, income and future ownership, while seeking to avoid unnecessary disruption to the business.

Most people would prefer to reach an agreement without going to court. The team takes a constructive approach wherever possible, helping clients save time, cost and stress. If court proceedings are needed, clear guidance and experienced representation are available throughout the process.

Putting children first

For parents, the children will usually be the main concern. Questions may arise about where they will live, how often they will see each parent, holidays, schooling and other important decisions.

Leeds Day helps parents make arrangements that support their children and work in everyday life. If an agreement cannot be reached—or an existing court order is not being followed—the team can explain the available options and assist with a court application where necessary.

Planning ahead

Family law is not only about relationship breakdown. The team also prepares and advises on pre-nuptial and post-nuptial agreements. These can be particularly helpful for people marrying for a second time, business owners or anyone wishing to protect family assets.

Couples who live together do not automatically have the same legal rights as married couples. A cohabitation agreement or declaration of trust can record how bills, mortgage payments and property ownership will be dealt with. Putting clear arrangements in place early can help prevent uncertainty later.

Meet the team

The Family Team is led by Partner Simon Thomas, who has more than 20 years' experience and is a collaboratively trained family solicitor. Simon works alongside Lisa Leader, an experienced family solicitor with particular expertise in financial and children matters, and Associate Solicitor Charlene "Charley" Powell, who advises on divorce, finances, child arrangements, cohabitation and domestic abuse. Paralegal Amy Osborn provides approachable and professional support to the team and its clients.

Appointments are available at Leeds Day's local offices, as well as by telephone or video call.

For an initial conversation, contact Leeds Day LLP on 0333 577 2250, email family@leedsday.co.uk. or visit www.leedsday.co.uk



Hilton Parish Council

A Civility & Respect Pledge Council

Report from the Meeting of the Council dated Monday 2nd November 2026

Christmas Lights

The Council agreed that, subject to them passing a PAT test, the Christmas lights on the Pavilion should be lit between 28th November and 5th January 2027.

Support for the Royal British Legion

The Council agreed to make a £60 donation to the ongoing work of the RBL and noted the Council would be represented at the annual Act of Remembrance and church service on Remembrance Sunday.

Budget and Precept for 2027-28

The Council decided to refer further work on the proposed budget and Precept for the municipal year 2027/28 for close scrutiny by the Finance Committee before the final proposals are considered at the December meeting of the full Council. Please note the Precept is an element of the overall Council Tax charged to households; having been collected by Huntingdonshire District Council the Precept element is passed to the Parish Council to use in the fulfilment of its obligations and opportunities.

From the Clerk

The Clerk was able to report important work to rectify problems with the Maze walls had been completed; with the cost borne by the contractor who had done the work in 2025.

From our County and District Councillors

District Councillor Nick Sarkies had submitted a succinct written report published in the Supporting Documents. County Councillor David Keane spoke of his involvement in the matter of yellow lines having been put on part of Church Lane without the due consents. He was asked about a spate small house break-ins and asked if this was a problem in other local villages. He indicated the first elections for the new unitary authority (when the details are resolved finally) will not be until 2028.

Green Open Spaces

The Council expressed thanks for the contribution of volunteers for a range of tasks undertaken on 25th October. The Council expects to have a detailed proposal for essential tree work to consider at the December meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 7th December 2026 in the Village Hall. Agendas will be posted in advance on the village notice boards and the Council'swebsite www.hiltonparishcouncil.com. Parishioners are welcome to speak on agenda items at council meetings.



Protect your home from flooding this winter

Every day we lock our homes to protect them from intruders. But we're actually 16% more likely to experience flooding than a break in. But there are some simple things you can do right now to protect your home from flooding this winter.

Why is the risk higher this winter?

The long hot summer we've had has caused the ground across our region to harden significantly. That means when it does rain, the water can't soak into the ground as quickly as normal so instead just sits on the surface.

During extreme weather events or very heavy rain, this can quickly cause flooding.



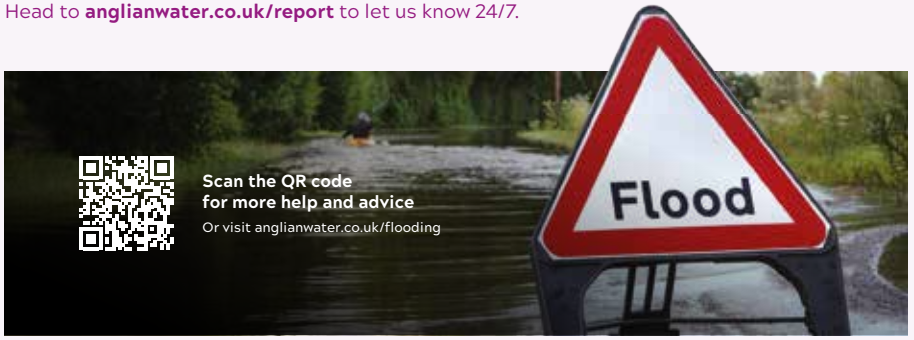
To reduce the risk of flooding:

- Check the gutters, drains and downpipes at your property. Clear out any leaves, silt or debris that have built up over the summer.
- Let your local council know if you spot any blocked gullies, drains or ditches near your home or in your local area.

To avoid blockages that cause sewer flooding:

- Only flush the 3Ps: pee, poo and paper.
- Bin wet wipes and sanitary products.
- Once cooled, bin any cooking fat, oil or grease.

If you ever see any flooding coming from one of our manholes, or you see something in a river, lake or stream that shouldn't be there, we want to know about it as soon as possible. Head to **anglianwater.co.uk/report** to let us know 24/7.



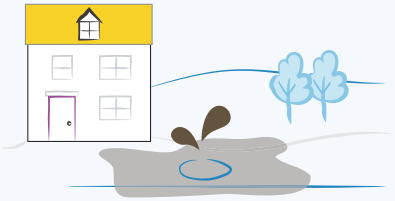
Who to contact for flooding help

Flooding is a complicated issue, and we're one of many agencies working on how to manage the impact it has. When flooding happens, who you need to contact will depend on what kind of issue it is.



Flood water from highways, run off from fields or issues with land drainage:

Contact your local council. Most flooding that's been caused by rainwater will subside once the rain stops. If the flood water is causing a danger to life, call **101** or **999**.



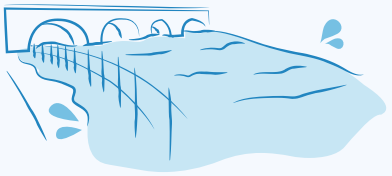
Clean water or sewer flooding:

We'll always keep a close eye on our network during any heavy rainfall, but if you spot something that's not right, visit **anglianwater.co.uk/report** to tell us quickly and easily. Or you can call us 24/7 on **03457 145 145**.



Clearing up debris after flooding:

To get help to clean up silt and mud left behind by receding rain or flood water, get in touch with your local council. If there's been any flooding from our sewers, we'll always clear up as soon as we can. But it's important to know that we'll always prioritise helping customers who've had flooding inside their homes or problems with their water supply first.



High or overflowing rivers:

Contact the Environment Agency on **0800 807 060** for help and advice. They've also published a guide called Living on the Edge for anyone who lives in a property along a river or watercourse.

Get more information on flooding insurance
Scan the QR code or visit floodre.co.uk

Get more help on recovering after a flood
Scan the QR code or visit nationalfloodforum.org.uk

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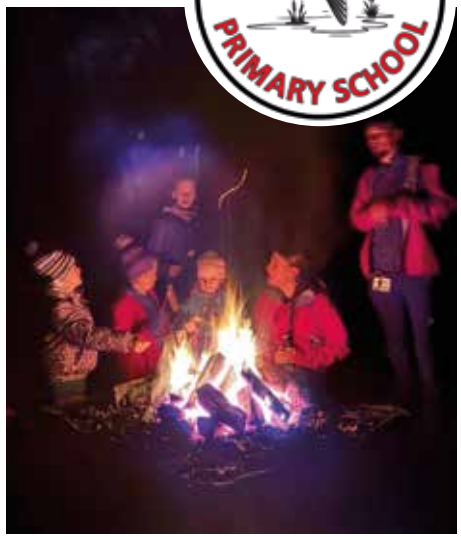
Fen Drayton Primary School

It's been another busy and exciting few weeks at Fen Drayton Primary School, with lots of wonderful opportunities for our children to learn, explore and try something new! From adventurous activities on residential to getting creative in the kitchen and discovering the world of ballet, there has been plenty going on. We're always proud to see the children embracing new challenges, developing their confidence and, most importantly, having fun along the way! Here's a little snapshot of what we've been up to.

Y5/6 residential adventure

Our Badgers class (Years 5 and 6) enjoyed a fantastic three-day residential trip to Norfolk Lakes, packed with exciting activities and new experiences!





The children challenged themselves with a range of activities, including rock climbing, giant canoeing and axe throwing, as well as enjoying the chance to toast marshmallows around the campfire. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to develop their confidence, teamwork and independence, whilst making some fantastic memories with their friends.

Fruit salad fun!

Our youngest children in Dormice class (Reception and Year 1) have been busy putting their culinary skills to the test as part of their Design and Technology lessons.

After practising their cutting skills in a previous lesson, the children were ready to make their very own fruit salads. They showed great confidence, resilience and concentration as they carefully chopped their fruit, remembering to use the 'claw' and 'bridge' techniques to keep their fingers safe.



The activity also linked beautifully with their science learning about good hygiene, with everyone remembering the importance of washing their hands before preparing food. The result was some delicious, healthy fruit salads that the children were very proud of!

Year 2 discover ballet

Our Rabbits class (Year 2) had a wonderful opportunity to explore the world of ballet during a special PE lesson led by the Royal Ballet and Opera.

The children learned about the different roles involved in bringing a ballet performance to life, watched some inspiring performances and even had a go at learning a few ballet moves themselves!

It was a fantastic opportunity to experience a different form of dance, develop their coordination and creativity, and perhaps even inspire some future ballet stars.



Starting school in 2027?

If your child was born between **September 2022 and August 2023**, they'll be due to start school in September 2027. Applications must be submitted by **15 January 2027** via Cambridgeshire County Council. Go to www.fendraytonprimary.co.uk/admissions for more information.

To help families get to know us, we're hosting a **Stay and Play session** in our Dormice classroom and outdoor area (weather permitting) on **Wednesday 18 November 3:30 to 4:00pm**. To book a spot, please contact the school office by phone or email.

We look forward to welcoming you to Fen Drayton Primary School.

Nina McQueen
Headteacher

School contact details

Email: office@fendrayton.cambs.sch.uk
Phone: 01954 273346

Website: www.fendraytonprimary.co.uk

Fen Drayton Bowls Club news

We had a good outdoor season bolstered by new members, with a good mix of old and new players for matches. The heat (remember that!) was challenging but everyone coped well.

With the current cold and damp conditions we're now fully into the indoor season of short mat bowls, which takes place in Fen Drayton village hall. Short mat bowls is suitable for all and equipment and tuition can be provided. Flat-soled footwear is required, please. Indoor sessions are on Fridays between 7 and 9 pm. If your evenings are busy we also have a Monday afternoon group which meets throughout the year between 2 and 4 pm for short mat sessions.



Happy Christmas to all and if, as a new year's resolution, you want to try something different, why not come and join us at any of the above sessions. Please contact the Club Secretary, Stephen George on 07876 407219, email at stephengeorge79@gmail.com or via our website which can now be accessed via the QR code opposite



Hilton Community Hub

Our wonderful team has recently spent much time in planning our future few weeks' activities until that wonderful time of year - "Chr ……(it's only November as I write!)

We have enjoyed National Vegetable Week, Sausage Week (Toad in the Hole for lunch of course), Guy Fawkes, all with linking quizzes. How we enjoy these knowledge testing times together, we don't even know what we had forgotten, but great, great fun.

Anthony Stanton visited to clarify our available bus routes and times, which was very helpful, there are more than you think, wouldn't children and grandchildren like a change, do you really need the car today?



Karen Baker, from both Hilton and Meadow Lodge Fruit Farms, gave us a fascinating account with from pictures of the work involved by the Baker family's orchard to the many varieties of delicious fruit and their juices.

On Wednesday 11 November, Armistice Day, we joined Roland Randall at the Lychgate followed by refreshments at an open table lunch. Thank you for your kind hospitality.

These truly interesting speakers happen during these weekly meetings with our Hub friends, new and 'old', when we also check on the absentees; and enjoy a chinwag in our very own special spirit of optimism and good humour.

Oh, and those tasty light lunches that don't just appear - hard work produces 'Janestrone ' soups, home-made rolls, pasta bakes, apple crumble…….

As at the beginning, although it is still early November, this edition of the Journal is honouring December and January and it is far, far too soon to be saying - Mer.. Chri….s, Ha…Ne. Y..r everyone so let it be in code for now.

As ever, if you haven't met us yet - we miss you every Wednesday morning, at Hilton Village Hall, 10.30 to 12.30.

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Hilton Art Club



As we reach the end of 2026 and beginning of 2027, we look back to another productive and enjoyable year at the Club.

It always interests me to see how people interpret the subject of the month and the different styles of everyone – not one the same. As I write, the most recent one, 'Showing Their Wares: Shop Fronts' was no exception, finding some quaint old buildings being used as shops, often including the customers, looking in the windows.

If you enjoy painting and drawing and are available one Friday morning a month (usually in the third week), you are welcome to come along to a taster session. Just contact Gina on 01480 830696 for further details.

18 December 12.15 pm The Windmill, Somersham: Christmas Lunch, already booked.

15 January 10.00 am – 12.30 pm Winter Shadows: Inside and Out. Please bring your reference photo(s), if using.

Let's Run Girls - Fen Drayton

LRG

New to running? Start with Let's Run Girls in January



Ever thought about taking up running but didn't know where to begin? Let's Run Girls Fen Drayton is launching a free friendly 10-week beginners' programme for women aged 16 and over, starting Monday 4 January 2027.

Meet at the Village Hall at 6.45pm each Monday and build up gradually, in a supportive women-only group, at a pace that suits you. No experience needed, and no one gets left behind.

Already running 30 minutes without stopping? Join our steady 30-minute run, which goes out every Monday evening too.

To find out more or to sign up, visit letsrungirls.com/fen-drayton. You can read more about starting out and whether it's right for you at letsrungirls.com/start-running.





Hilton WI

We have had such a varied life of programmes lately with a selection of activities to suit all tastes.

Importantly in November we welcomed Emma Spencer the newly appointed county chair who is aiming to visit every WI in the area, and that is quite a challenge.

Back in October we gathered two teams of four and headed off to Hemingford Abbots full of knowledge ready for the annual WI Quiz, but did our knowledge match the questions because these quizzes have been notoriously difficult in the past.

Well, one team achieved 2nd place and only points away from the winners, Werrington WI, and our remaining teams were close behind us.

We have so often enjoyed films but on one recent occasion, Rose of Nevada at the Corn Exchange was intensely disliked by all who saw it with ' the worst film I have ever seen!

Craft club peeped towards Christmas and made small decorations with diamond painting, that was fun …..and all the regular groups are as well established as ever.



Guest speaker Becca Graveling (centre) with Emma Spencer (second right)

the WI
INSPIRING WOMEN

In November we asked Becca Graveling to tell us about her new life - coach venture entitled 'Finding more Fulfilment in Life'. It is a means of personal reflection, the need to admit to what is right for me, what would I like to change and giving myself permission to act. Becca gave us an eight-section wheel in which to shade life situations to a greater or lesser degree of importance according to their intensity. Many thoughts came home with us so thank you, Becca.

Our November magazine from Federation has some interesting, even quirky choices, among them an Ocarina workshop in January, a talk on the History of our Federation building in May and March offers an Emergency Briefing on the crisis of nature and the climate. We also learn that 200 acres of farmland near Warboys is being returned to species rich meadows, ponds and wetlands thus creating a haven for wildlife.

Finally ladies. When you feel 'hard done by' and bemoan your lot in society remember this:

On November 6th 1942 the Church of England relaxed the rule insisting that ladies wore hats in church and likewise considered it disgraceful for men to have long hair.

Wow! Progress!

hiltonwisecretary@gmail.com

Report on Hilton Community Garden 2026

The Community Garden in Hilton held their sixth Annual General Meeting on 31 October 2026. This is the report given by the chair of the committee, Heather Chambers.

My thanks must go to all the committee for their hard work and commitment to the garden. It is a real team venture and it has been a pleasure to chair the committee over the last 12 months. We could never have dreamt that the year would produce floods and heatwaves and it is a tribute to everyone that we have produced so much produce under such difficult conditions.

The Brownies and Beavers again planted potatoes for entry into the Produce Show in July. For each party we had three groups each involved in a different activity:-

- **potting the potatoes and decorating the pots;**
- **looking at the tools we have in the garden and how we use and look after them with particular emphasis on safety**
- **investigating the ways in which the many creature visitors to our garden help the plants and trees to grow.**

Each child took home their planted potato with a fact sheet explaining how to look after the plant and also a sheet on tools and creatures. There were plenty of helpers and the children seemed to enjoy their time in the garden. Huge thanks to John and Claire who were brilliant, each leading a different group.

Our entries at the village produce show did very well with: First places with beetroot and blackberries. And third places with onions, potatoes and mini cucumbers.

Other successes this year have been: Broad beans, Spinach, Iceberg lettuce (mini col) Cherry toms, Courgettes, Garlic, Black currants, Rhubarb, carrots, Squash, cherry radish, lettuce in trugs, turnips and Compost.

Following visits to the garden by dogs not on a lead, we arranged for a new sign to be made and this is now in place to welcome well behaved dogs on a lead. Thanks to Stuart Walsh for this.



A grant of £3,000 was received from the National Garden scheme for a new larger shed, furniture and a bug hotel. Special thanks to John for a huge amount of research about the shed and for organising the digging out of the base. We have had several fish and chip suppers in the garden which have been enjoyed by all who attend.

The new arrangements for hoses and watering can storage are much better than the previous system. Again thanks to John for this. We also received a grant to improve the poly tunnel and a new watering system is in place which has been installed by Sharon and Rob.

The visitors' book comments this year were translated to a lovely page in the Journal sharing the great comments which we have received.

We have had an issue with rabbits in the garden and Rob and Sam have spent many hours ensuring that the garden will be rabbit proof in 2027.

We had a Duke of Edinburgh student with us for several weeks. Katy and her Mum came to the garden to assist in managing the plot and to learn new skills.

We continue to enjoy Jan's cakes and Heather W's meticulous account keeping so thank you both. The garden is a success due to the commitment of all those who come to the working groups on Saturday mornings and those who work here during the week.

We are always looking for more help so if you do know anyone who would like to get involved please get in touch.

Fenstanton Friendship Club

Can it really be 77 years since we were founded as a club? Time flies. That was in 1949 by a dedicated group of villagers and we still meet every other Wednesday at 2.00 pm in the building of the United Reformed Church in Chequer Street. Although we hold our meetings in the church building, we are not affiliated to the church. Our activities are varied and as well as the yearly trips out to lunch, cream teas, boat trips on The Ladybird, strawberry tea and Christmas celebration, we will have various speakers and entertainers.

7 October Tony and Elmarie Erasmus gave us a wonderful talk about South Africa past and present, also their life there. We are glad they choose to spend half the year here with us. Refreshments were delightful African treats, enjoyed by all.





21 October Martin John, once more, gave us a great afternoon of piano, guitar music and singing. Such a good artist, always a pleasure to see him.

Upcoming meetings

2 December The "Merrymakers" will be our entertainment, getting into the Christmas spirit.

16 December Our Christmas tea party. Carols, games and good food.

13 January 2027 A trip to Burgess Hall for our annual pantomime outing. Oh yes we are! Looking forward to "Robinhood and his Merry Men"

27 January A talk and a demonstration about Electric Guitars by Frank.

10 February Storybook Village

24 February Musical afternoon with Charlie Chaplin.

Any questions please contact me. Marie Newns bubblenewns@gmail.com 01480 350119





Girlguiding

Hilton Rainbows and Brownies

This term Rainbows and Brownies have been busy doing interest badges. The Rainbows planned their own meeting and the leaders facilitated their requests which included a seaside themed party with pass the parcel and lollies in the layers, a food activity - we decorated biscuits to look like the beach with fishes and a jellybaby sunbathing. They also made mermaids with the Promise on. Rainbows are also making their own toys for a Toy Badge, and later in the term, their own gift wrap to wrap presents for Christmas.

Brownies have been playing various board games and then designing their own and trying it out with the other Brownies. They have learned about different types of dance and tried a Scottish country dance which they hope to show to the residents when they make their annual Christmas visit in December to The Chase Care Home. Brownies also have a visit to the Town Hall planned where they will be shown around and also look at some of the St Ives landmarks.

Remembrance has been observed with some Rainbows, Brownies and Guides helping serve at the Poppy day in October in the Village Hall and taking part in the service for Remembrance Sunday at the Lychgate and in church.

We have places available in both Brownies and Rainbows, if interested please register on line www.girlguiding.co.uk or contact us for further information.

Karen, Julie and Amy
Brownie and Rainbow Leaders

Hilton Flower Club

November's meeting was a most enjoyable afternoon. Tim Meakin was our demonstrator and he did six wonderful Christmas arrangements and also gave us lots of ideas for when we do our own Christmas creations at home.

7 December is our end of year party, we are having a Christmas workshop first. Don't forget to bring your scissors, afterwards it will be drinks and refreshments, we know it will be a fun afternoon.

We don't meet again until 1 February.

1 February Simon White will be giving us a talk and slide show on "Wonderful Gardens".

**June and Beverley wish all our Flower Club Friends,
A Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year
See you all in the New Year.
Beverley**

The Yellow Pages



Venues for hire

Fen Drayton Village Hall	07596 576515
Fenstanton Church Centre	01954 230471
Fenstanton Community Hall	07496 870331
Hilton Village Hall	07752 678415

Councils

Cambridgeshire County Council	0345 045 5200
Fen Drayton Parish Council	07704 023534
Fenstanton Parish Council	01480 465300
Hilton Parish Council	07770 697240
Huntingdonshire District Council	01480 388388
South Cambs District Council	0345 045 0500

Community Groups and Clubs

Books and Jigsaws at FURC	07541 358348
Fen Drayton Bowls Club	07876 407219
Fen Drayton Lions FC	07718 900880
Fen Drayton Parent and Toddlers	07549 630124
Fen Drayton Tennis Club	01954 231752
Fen Shanty Folk	07841 599492
Fenstanton Baby and Toddler Group	07742 259653
Fenstanton Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	07531 863368
Fenstanton Bowls Club	07876 343900
Fenstanton Community Hub	07949 453767
Fenstanton Football Club	07968 081874
Fenstanton Friendship Club	01480 350119
Fenstanton Glebe Allotments	07817 786298
Fenstanton Morris	07890 863369
Fenstanton Tai Chi	07799 444993
Fenstanton Town Trust	01480 464753
Fenstanton Knitter and Natters	07541 358348
Fenstanton Litter Picking	07949 453767
Fenstanton Speed Watch	07949 453767
Hilton Art Club	01480 830696
Hilton Baby and Toddler Group	07527 394945
Hilton British Legion	01480 831186
Hilton Community Garden	07488 351128
Hilton Flower Club	01480 830571

Community Groups and Clubs

Hilton HGV Watch	07768 294878
Hilton Neighbourhood Watch	01480 831658
Hilton Rainbows and Brownies	07970 404569
Hilton Speed Watch	07540 811115
Hilton Town Trust	01480 830866
Hilton WI	01480 831186
RSPB	01954 233260
Slimming World	07544 850846

Community events

Fen Drayton 10k run	07919 254467
Fenstanton Christmas Market	07949 453767
Hilton Feast Week	01480 830605
Hilton Produce Show	01480 830412
Hilton Summer Ball	01480 831299
The BIG Village Fun Day	07713 413060

Education

Fen Drayton Primary School	01954 273346
Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School	01480 375055
Hilton Day Nursery	01767 688715
Ladybird Day Nursery	01480 469166
Sunhill Nursery	01954 230030
Swavesey Village College	01954 230366

Churches

St Mary's Church, Fen Drayton	01480 465211
Fenstanton Parish Church	01480 465211
Fenstanton URC	07710 240363
Hilton Methodist Church	01480 830686
Hilton Parish Church	01480 830866
St Ives Roman Catholic Church	01480 462192
The Particular Baptist Church	01480 830142

Emergency numbers

A&E Addenbrooks Hospital	01233 217118
A&E Hinchinbrooke Hospital	01480 416416
Environment Agency (Flood Line)	0845 9881188
Fenstanton pharmacy	01480 495159
Fenstanton surgery	01480 461873

Emergency numbers

Fly Tipping	0345 0450500
Gas leak	0800 111 999
Non emergency medical	111
Non emergency Police	101
Papworth pharmacy	01480 831415
Papworth surgery	01480 830888
Peterborough City Hospital	01733 678000
Power cut	0800 678 3105
Samaritans	116 123 Free
Swavesey surgery	01954 230202
Water leak	0800 316 7676

Buses

A2B	0800 001 6255
Dews Coaches	01487 740241
Stagecoach	01223 423578
Whippet Coaches	01954 230011

Eating places

Barry's Plaice	01480 462382
Little Piggy Cafe	07764 336911

Retail

Alan's Carpets	07790 681317
Ash's Store	01480 466225
Denise Jackson Interiors	07910 507514
Eye Specs	01480 499606
Ron's Farm Shop	01480 495127
Soft Furnishings by Pamela Anne	07411 805715

Garden services

Hamptons Groundcare	01480 274848
Hemingford Arboriculture	01480 463674

Decorators

Jason Kirby	01954 211775
N&M Decor	07799 598810

Design, printing and copying

St Ives Quickprint Ltd	01480 465215

Household services

Cambridgeshire Bathrooms	01480 598750
Cambridge Light Removals	01480 352220
Christopher the Locksmith	07772 111222
Easton & Cook Funerals	01480 310400
Fairy Dog Mother	01480 461959
Fenstanton Dental	01480 381129
Hamptons Pest Control	01480 274848
Hilton Private Hire	07521 293434
J L Wight Chimney Sweep	01954 253315
MC Cleaning Ltd	07496 508596
More Space Storage	01480 830130
Sureclean	07870 338074
Television Mobile Repair Service	07887 887319
W&H Peacock Auctioneers	01480 474550
Z Cars Taxis	01480 462046

Electricians

Bowling Electrical Services	07903 756915
TW Electrical	07810 710826
Twin Electrical Services	07796 492953

Plumbing and Heating Engineers

J Halstead	01480 830329
MDS P&H Ltd	07860 829591
RDS	01954 770309
T. N Walsh	07887 561525

Building services and supplies

GCE Groundworks	07737 884643
Graham Malkan	07799 850237
R D B Flooring	07970 256237

Car servicing and repairs

Wilderspin Garage	01954 230273
Richard's Mobile Mechanic	07368 356105

The Journal

Advertising	07768 274456
Circulation	07876 446565
Editorial - Fen Drayton	07711 442473
Editorial - Fenstanton	07952 838121
Editorial - Hilton	07793 794431

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