THE BRADFIELD GRAPEVINE

December 2025/January 2026 No:242



Dear Neighbours,

As we reach the end of the year, this December–January edition is a particularly packed one, full of seasonal reads and plenty to enjoy over the Christmas break. Inside, you'll find a couple of recipes, a look ahead to events already taking shape for next year, and details of the last gatherings of 2025; including KIT Café on the 20th Dec and carols around the tree (on the village green) with refreshments and musical accompaniment (from Adam on guitar) at 6:30pm on Monday 8th Dec. There's also a full list of carol services and seasonal events to help you plan the weeks ahead.

I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to the Grapevine, from regular writers to those who send in recipes, articles, photos and little snippets each month. Your input is what keeps these pages lively and full of variety.

With my first full year of Grapevines now under my belt, I'm so grateful for all the support and encouragement. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Here's to more community news, stories and events in 2026!

Margaret Lovick
Tel: 01284 386662

Sarah Pittard
Tel: 07816754163

Email: stclaregrapevine@gmail.com

Letter from the Rectory

Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming – there, I've said it, it now is real and tangible, not just a far-off event, there's lots to do, lots to plan, lots to think about. But if we're not careful December can pass by in a flash, and we haven't prepared for the reason for Christmas in the first place, the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

In the Church we prepare for Christmas over a month before it happens through what we call the 'Season of Advent' (though in reality these days we start preparing some time before Advent....). Advent means the arrival of an important person, or thing, and what could be more important than the arrival of Jesus – God in person, a flesh and blood human being.

Throughout Advent we look forward to Christmas, but we also reflect on the past, and we remember certain people who figure prominently in our scriptures, the bible, who are part of the story of our Christian faith. People from the Old Testament like Abraham and his wife Sarah, King David and King Solomon. And people from the New Testament such as John the Baptist, and of course, Mary, the mother of Jesus.

As we do this, it helps us to understand the great thing that God has done by sending his Son to save us, you and me, and everybody. There are many people on the edges of our society who have never heard of God, let alone Jesus or the Holy Spirit and it is they that Jesus came to help - those who are marginalised or on the edge. He mixed with those who were despised in society, and was eventually killed outside the city walls, and all because he loved us.

Now isn't that a wonderful reason to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas?

May I take this opportunity to wish all readers of the Grapevine good tidings for the season, and may your Advent, Christmas and New Year be blessed.

Yours in Christ

Canon Sharon

revsharon2@gmail.com, 01284 828599 or 07825 086063
www.cockfieldbenefice.com

Cockfield Benefice Services and Events - December 2025

Saturday 6 December	2pm-4pm Knit'n'natter at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall. All crafters/knitters/crocheters welcome.
Sunday 7 December **Advent 2**	10.30am Communion at Cockfield 4pm Advent Christingle at Gt Whelnetham
Tuesday 9 December	11am Holy Communion at Felsham Village Hall followed by soup and sandwiches
Thursday 11 December	12.30pm - 3pm Village Friends Christmas Lunch (places must be booked - contact Canon Sharon)
Sunday 14 December **Advent 3**	10.30am Communion at Bradfield St Clare 4pm Carol Service & Christmas music with Tudor Rose Choir at Gedding
Monday 15 December	7pm Carols by Candlelight at Lt Whelnetham
Tuesday 16 December	7pm Carol Service at Felsham with oil lamp display
Wednesday 17 December	7pm Carol Service at Bradfield St George 7pm Community Carols at Cockfield
Thursday 18 December	7pm Carol Service at Bradfield St Clare
Sunday 21st December **Advent 4**	10.30am Carol Communion at Stanningfield 4pm Carol Service at Cockfield
Wednesday 24 December **Christmas Eve**	3pm Crib Service at Bradfield St Clare 9pm Christmas Eve Communion Felsham 11.30am Midnight Mass at Cockfield
Thursday 25 December **Christmas Day**	10am Communion at Bradfield St George 10am Communion at Gt Whelnetham
Sunday 28 December **Christmas 1**	10.30am Communion at Bradfield St Clare

Cockfield Benefice Services and Events - January 2026

Saturday 3 January	2pm-4pm Knit'n'natter at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall. All crafters/knitters/crocheters welcome.
Sunday 4 January **Epiphany**	9.30am Morning Prayer - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St Clare
Sunday 11 January **Baptism of Christ/Epiphany 1**	10am Morning Prayer - Cockfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Praise & Worship - Gt Whelnetham
Tuesday 13	11am Holy Communion - Felsham Village Hall (soup and sandwiches served following the service)
Thursday 15 January	2-4pm Village Friends at Felsham Village Hall (over 65s friendship group)
Saturday 17 January	 All children welcome accompanied by parent/carer(s) 3-5pm, venue tbc
Sunday 18 January **Epiphany 2**	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 10am Praise God Together - Felsham 10.30am Holy Communion - Cockfield 4pm Evening Prayer - Bradfield St Clare
Sunday 25 January **Epiphany 3**	9.30am Holy Communion - Gt Whelnetham 10am Worshipping Together - Bradfield St George

A service of Celtic-style Morning Prayer is usually held every Tuesday at Cockfield at 9am and at Stanningfield every Thursday at 9am.

Please note these services may be subject to change – for up-to-date service times see the benefice website at www.cockfieldbenefice.com. For any other matter contact Rev Canon Sharon Potter, revsharon2@gmail.com, tel: 01284 828599 or 07825 086063.

VILLAGE FRIENDS

An over 65's friendship group

the next meeting will be on
Thursday 11th December 2025
at Felsham and Gedding Village Hall which will be our
Christmas Dinner
at an earlier start of 12.30pm.
Booking essential!

If you would like to come please contact:
Canon Sharon 01284-828599 or 07825 086063
revsharon2@gmail.com

Organised by the Cockfield Benefice

VILLAGE QUIZ

A big thank you to everyone who came to the Hedgehog Quiz on Friday 21 st November. And a special thank you to everyone who helped beforehand and on the night and also those who gave raffle prizes. **We raised a princely £323**, which, with gift aid, will be about £400.

For your diaries, don't forget 11 th March 2026, when Lynda Brignall, who runs the Hedgehog Hospital, will give an evening talk. More information from Lorraine Morley on 07742 151667, logmorley@yahoo.co.uk

GATEHOUSE FOOD BANK BURY ST EDMUNDS

CHRISTMAS IS COMING AND WITH IT ARE EVEN HARDER TIMES FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHOM THE FOOD BANK HELP ALL THROUGH THE YEAR.

Many people find feeding their families difficult because of financial constraints, however these may be caused.

Please could we appeal to those who are able to help with donations of food to leave whatever they can in the collection boxes. There is one in the church porch and one by the front door of The Maltings on Bury Road.

Dry, packeted and tinned foods are very welcome as well as toiletries and female hygiene goods. Please could we ask that anything beyond it's use-by date not be included, as Gatehouse are unable to distribute them.

Many thanks and a peaceful Christmas to all.

Clive and Sue Leal (Food bank co-ordinators for Bradfield St Clare)

John Skelly Fish Limited

Brings fresh fish from Lowestoft to you locally in Bradfield St Clare

When: Every Friday

Where: Bush Cottage @ 9.40am and Village Hall Car Park @ 9.50am



KIT CAFE
keep in touch.



Our Christmas opening will be:
Saturday, 20th December from 11 am – 1 pm

Tea, Coffee (as much as you can drink)
And lots of Christmassy things to eat

This café is FREE and OPEN TO EVERYONE
but donations are very welcome
Why not make a date in your diary?

There is something for everyone at the Kit Café and you can be sure of a very warm welcome and plenty of lively chat.

“MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE AND THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT”



If anyone would like to contribute a cake or savoury item we would be most grateful.



WHIST DRIVE



Our next whist drive will be held on **Friday, 5th December.**

Entry is £2 per player with all proceeds handed out in prize money. Tea and biscuits are served at the half way stage. There is also a prize draw the proceeds of which go towards village hall funds for the upkeep of the hall. **Donations of draw prizes would be much appreciated.**

Last month's joint winners were Margaret and Justine with 171 points.

We are always on the lookout for new players. So if you or anyone you know enjoys playing cards please come along. Whist is a simple game and lots of fun but it's much more enjoyable when there are a few more tables.



For further information ring Val Nunn on 07483245825.

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01284 386538 (Head office)

Church Wardens Report

If you are new to our village and would like to join us, you will be very welcome. The Church will be decorated for Christmas on Sat 13th December. If you can spare some time to help around 10:30 I would be very pleased to see you. If anyone has holly or greenery, please leave it in the porch.

Our Carol Service is on Thursday 18th December, 7pm. Refreshments will be served after this service.

We will be presenting a crib service at 3pm, Wednesday 24th, a chance to meet our new curate.

Sunday 28th December 10:30, Holy Communion.

Thank you to all that decorated the church with flowers this year. Please give Lorraine a ring on 07742151667 if you would like to do church flowers in 2026.

In 2026 we will be reverting to the 1st Sunday of the month for our 11 o'clock service and 3rd Sunday for our evensong.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Lorraine and Margaret

Carols around the tree

There is a gathering of people who would like to get together in the spirit of Christmas, enjoy a hot drink and refreshments.

Mon Dec 8 at 6:30pm, Bradfield St Clare village green.

Please bring a torch and we will do the rest.

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Self saucing chocolate pudding

One of those puddings that seems like magic, but it works. Not the prettiest pudding in the world, but delicious with vanilla ice cream. And perfect for a cold autumn evening

Ingredients

7 oz/200g self raising flour
2oz/60g cocoa powder
4oz/110g light brown sugar
6 fl oz/170ml milk
20z/60g melted butter
1 egg, beaten
1 tsp vanilla essence

Topping

3oz/85g light brown sugar
2 oz/60g cocoa powder

Method

Heat the oven to 180C, gas mark 4. Butter a 2 pint bowl
Whisk together flour, cocoa powder, sugar and a pinch of salt
Beat together milk, egg, butter, vanilla and add to flour mixture
Scrape into the dish and sprinkle over the topping ingredients
Pour over 500ml. boiling water. Bake for 35-40 minutes

(Recipe from Isobel Payne)

Autumn update from Bishops farm

In relative terms it's been a very kind autumn for farmers locally with significantly fair conditions for establishing autumn sown cereal crops. Oilseed rape and cover crops sown in August have done nothing but grow with such mild conditions and now all look great moving into winter. With plenty of grazing available for the sheep they are slowly but surely working their way around the farm with only one field so far of notable escapism! The tup has arrived to join the ewes now also and so next spring's lambs will soon be in the making.

Wheat and Barley has all been planted and emerged quickly from very fine seedbeds and we've had perfect spray conditions for autumn herbicides and aphid control. Crop potential is high at this stage with what looks like the biggest UK wheat crop planted for over 5 years at circa 1.72 million hectares. However, I wouldn't be a farmer if I didn't grumble about something, it seems price and global futures for cereals are back to figures lower than before the outbreak of the Ukraine war. Our cost of production has increased greatly over the past 5 years and the latest budget is doing everything it can to squeeze every part of the UK economy including rural and agricultural businesses. Crops look great, but that's not so good if their predicted outlook isn't worth anything and will barely cover the costs to grow and harvest them.

We have around 30 acres of winter ploughing to do ahead of planting Spring beans, and both the young and old stock cows are safely tucked up inside their winter housing. We've now received some healthy doses of rain throughout November bringing soils back up to their water holding capacity and our annual rainfall back towards an average total despite such a deficit we received last spring.

We have fertiliser planning and compliance documents to pull together over winter before we can really get back to some work out on the land. Over winter, the land has time to rest and draw breath before the hive of farmland life and activities commences again next spring.

Tom
Dairy Farm House

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A message from Pat

Gosh where did 2025 go? Come and gone in a flash, fairly traumatic year personally, locally, nationally and globally, the world seems a less stable place! But some things remain the same however small and insignificant - I shall hope to buy the village Christmas tree next week and hopefully it will be in place in the first week in December courtesy of Messrs Bullard, Kirk and Thomas who erect it who and their wives who decorates it (please feel free to add your own baubles). It will hopefully become the focal point in the village over the festive season. My 'thank you /friendship' tree is to express my grateful and sincere thanks for all your help and support throughout the year - I could not manage without!

Last year Margaret and I revived the tradition (in a very low key way) started several years ago by the Morleys, of gathering to sing carols/Christmas songs round the tree - spurred on by hot drinks, mince pies, sausage rolls etc, although horrible weather last year saw hardly a soul turn up! This is in no way a substitute/ replacement for the wonderful Carol services, readings and carols which take place during the following weeks leading up to Christmas in every church in the benefice. Our gathering is entirely secular, in the village, by the village, for the village. I know it's a busy time of year, there is absolutely no compulsion to attend - you do not have to provide anything just a torch, your best singing voice and wrap up warm! An added attraction - Adam will provide the backing with his guitar etc. worth coming for that alone. So do join us on **Monday the 8th of December at 6:30** for an hour, you'll be home for EastEnders!

I shall be hoping to donate to CRISIS at Christmas and the Bury Drop in Centre by selling my miniature Christmas puddings containing A Ferrero Rocher or Lindor chocolate (£1.50 each). Sadly my freezer packed up while I was in hospital so no marmalade oranges just a very few (6) jars at £3.50 each. It is estimated that there will be even more homeless people on the streets this year. There are many charities helping, Centre Point, St mungos, Salvation Army etc, but I always support CRISIS this year and a place is only a few pence short of £30 so your donations however small will be welcome. I'm always reminded of Ralph McTells song 'Streets of London' - "So, how can

you tell me you're lonely? And say for you that the sun don't shine? Let me take you by the hand. And lead you through the streets of London. I'll show you something to make you change your mind." So please, in spite of rising inflation bills etc. put your hands in your pockets and dig deep!

Christmas means many different things to many people. Mostly a joyous time, to meet up with friends, exchange gifts and cards and spend time with families, a time for children. Though many of us deplore the over-commercialisation of Christmas and the pressure to spend beyond our means, let's put the world's woes aside and 'Eat, drink and be merry' "Joy to the world."

But for many of us it means much more than this - summed up two lines

"For in a manger cradled we know, Christ came to Bethlehem long long ago."

May you all have a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Fond Love, Pat Hipwell

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Bradfield Weather

Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	Oct 2024	Oct 2025
95.5 mm	38 mm	168 mm	64 mm	65 mm
Nov 2021	**Nov 2022**	**Nov 2023**	**Nov 2024**	**Nov '25 -22nd**
34 mm	109.5 mm	99 mm	42 mm	114 to 22nd

I'm writing this after the first properly cold spell of the autumn – so does that now make it officially winter? I think I've said before that I like to think winter only starts after Christmas day and that Spring starts in February but I'm not sure any meteorologists would agree with me! Nothing too dramatic so far, according to Tom's weather data the coldest we got to was -2.4°C but it will have signalled to plants that it's the time for dormancy. Hopefully we shall have some short spells of cold dry weather early in the New Year and that will assist in getting rid of garden pests and diseases. Did you notice there was very little rose disease this year as a result of the dry weather?

There's been quite a bit of rain this month, more than our 63mm 32 yr average but after the excessively dry summer the ground is nicely soaking it up. The dew pond at the bottom of the park here now has a puddle in the bottom of it but it's a long way from being full. We've added about another 30 trees and planting conditions have been good, with more or less the right amount of moisture in the soil for good root establishment. Currently there are two boxes of bulbs sitting in our porch and now that we've had a cold snap it's a good time to get on and get the tulips into the ground. Late November slips between my fingers and suddenly Christmas is upon us and the bulbs will probably still be sitting in the porch!

Huge thanks to Sarah for editing The Grapevine and her eternal patience at waiting for my reports – my New Year's resolution of getting them in on time didn't last! Wishing you all an extremely Happy Christmas and optimistically looking forward to a year of perfect weather for 2026.

Alice Ward-Thomas 25th November 2025

MIDWEEK SPECIAL

SAVE THE DATE
11 MARCH 2026

7:30pm - An evening talk with **Suffolk Hedgehog Hospital volunteer, Lynda Brignall**, who rescues & rehabilitates sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs.

More information to follow soon!



Joint fundraiser for St Clare Church and Suffolk Hedgehog Hospital

The Library Van Dates 2025

Contact: help@suffolklibraries.co.uk Telephone: 01473 351249
The Library Van will call at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall from **9.40am until 9.55am** on **Wednesday 10th December**

New small electrical recycling points

Dear Town and Parish Councils,

We are delighted to announce that to make recycling easier and more accessible, we have launched a new recycling initiative to encourage residents and visitors to recycle their small electricals.

There are 18 new small electrical recycling points across the district, installed at existing mini recycling centres in high footfall areas. Please see the list attached for the exact locations.

Residents can locate their nearest recycling point here: https://maps.westsuffolk.gov.uk/

The new collection points can be filled with small electricals including mobile phones, tablets, cables, kettles, toasters and kids toys, anything smaller than a standard sized microwave.

This exciting initiative aligns with West Suffolk Council's ongoing commitment to environmental resilience and sustainable growth, whilst encouraging positive behavioural change.

This recycling initiative was funded by Material Focus, an independent not-for-profit organisation, who provided £34,822 to support this project.

The items placed in the bins will be collected by Wiser Recycling, with regular updates to West Suffolk Council to measure the impact and effectiveness of the new bins, and with the hope to secure additional funding to encourage a further roll out across the district.

Kind regards,
Cllr David Taylor

BIN COLLECTIONS

Wednesday 3 December	Black Bin
Wednesday 10 December	Blue Bin
Tuesday 16 December	Brown Bin
Wednesday 17 December	Black Bin
Wednesday 24 December	Blue Bin

www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/bindays

Christmas and New Year bin collection days

Collections will take place as normal up to, and including, Wednesday 24 December 2025. Collections return to normal from Monday 12 January 2026.

Usual collection	Revised collection
Thursday 25 December	Saturday 27 December
Friday 26 December	Monday 29 December
Monday 29 December	Tuesday 30 December
Tuesday 30 December	Wednesday 31 December
Wednesday 31 December	Friday 2 January
Thursday 1 January	Saturday 3 January
Friday 2 January	Monday 5 January
Monday 5 January	Tuesday 6 January
Tuesday 6 January	Wednesday 7 January
Wednesday 7 January	Thursday 8 January
Thursday 8 January	Friday 9 January
Friday 9 January	Saturday 10 January

Change to two tier council structure

The Government has launched a consultation on the biggest changes to Suffolk local government in 50 years. The two tier council structure is changing with the government abolishing county, Borough and district councils, and replacing them with a new unitary council arrangement. Residents are urged to have their say in this.

Please go to https://consult.communities.gov.uk/ to see the consultation and have your say on the future of local councils in Suffolk which is likely to see either one or as many as three councils tasked with delivering services for the next 50 years.

The public consultation will close on 10 January 2026. After the consultation period Government ministers will be making their final decision on how to proceed in Suffolk.

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Condensed Milk Snow Cookies.

Ingredients



1cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup icing sugar
1 Tsp vanilla extract
2 cups SR flour
2 tabs cornflour

Method

Pinch of salt.Cream butter and icing sugar until light and fluffy. Add condensed milk and vanilla extract.

Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl.
Whisk together with all the other ingredients. Mix until it forms a soft dough.

Preheat oven to 180°
Roll dough into 1" balls
Put on baking tray 2" apart
Bake for 12-15 minutes
Leave for 5 minutes to cool -:dust with icing sugar....eat .

Happy Christmas

Debbie

(Recipe from Debbie Thomas)

Tree Planting Update

Seven intrepid villagers arrived on Church Lane, Sue, Will, Mike and Lorraine, John, Adam and Val on 26th November to plant 12 trees along with mulch matting, steaks and tree guards. We planted a mix of oak, ash, maple and others.

It was a perfect morning with the sheep looking on and a legacy for future generations to enjoy.

This was rounded off by tea, coffee and CAKE - but of course, it's Bradfield St Clare after all!







Now Playing… Rock Your Christmas:
An Alternative Holiday Playlist



If you're looking to shake up your usual Christmas soundtrack, why not add a little rock and metal to your festive season? From high-energy glam to epic metal storytelling, there's plenty of holiday cheer with a heavier edge!

Here's a fun fact: the late actor Sir Christopher Lee recorded a series of metal-tinged Christmas songs — turning classics like "Silent Night" into dramatic, gothic renditions……. who would have thought he was a true metal-head?

For a starter playlist, try these tracks:

- **Wizards in Winter** – Trans-Siberian Orchestra – orchestral metal magic. (worth finding the video to watch)
- **Christmas Eve/Sarajevo 12/24** – Trans-Siberian Orchestra – epic orchestral storytelling.
- **Christmas Truce** – Sabaton – heavy-metal storytelling with history. (Also has quite a moving video)
- **Christmas with the Devil** – Spinal Tap – cheeky, over-the-top metal fun.
- **Christmas Time (Don't Let the Bells End)** – The Darkness – glam rock holiday cheer.

Merry Christmas from Sarah and Adam!

A Song of the Holly

by William Cox Bennett (public domain)

O holly branch and holly berry,
Now Christmas comes, and all is merry!
So deck the hall, and trim the tree,
And sing a carol joyfully.

Useful Local Contacts

Anglian Water - Emergencies	03457 145145
Borough Council	St Edmundsbury Offices - 01284 763233
Local Member	Sarah Mildmay-White - 01359 270580 Sara.Mildmay-White@stedsbc.gov.uk
Bradfield St Clare Village Halll Bookings	Mrs Val Nunn - 01284 388830
Bra dfield Grapevine Magazine	Sarah Pittard - 07816754163 stclaregrapevine@gmail.com Mrs Margaret Lovick - 01284 386662
Bury Stray Cat Fund	01284 388455
Charity for the Relief in Sickness	Secretary: Mrs Vicky Spall - 01284 386357
Suffolk County Council Switchboard	01284 763233
Local Councillor	Mrs Karen Soons - 07864601887 Karen.soons@suffolk.gov.uk
Dentist (Emergency)	By appointment Sat and Sun pm 0300 130 3065
Doctor – Suffolk Doctors on Call	Ring your own Surgery
	Or alternatively call 111
Electricity	UK Power Networks Supply Faults 0800 783 8838
Footpath Warden	Mrs Fenella Fraser - 01284 388310
Gospel Hall	Mr Keith Arknett - 01359 240910
Mobile Library	Mr Carl Bell - 07721 879855
Member of Parliament	Peter Prinsley - Labour peter.prinsley.mp@parliment.uk
Neighbourhood Watch Contact	Mrs Dianne Bullard - 01284 386598
Parish Council Clerk	Mrs Nicola Sturgeon - 07817170906
Parish Council Website	http://bradfieldstclare.one Suffolk.net
Police	101 (non-urgent) 999 (urgent)
Post office Delivery Office	01284 358201
Schools:Cockfield Primary	01284 828287
Thurston Community College	01359 230885
West Suffolk College	01284 701301
St Clare Church	Rev. Canon Sharon Potter revsharon2@gmail.com 01284 828599 / 07825 086063
St Edmunds RC Church	Fr David Bagstaff - 01284 754358

Hire Bradfield St Clare Village Hall for just £10 per hour!

Contact Val Nunn for bookings (details above)