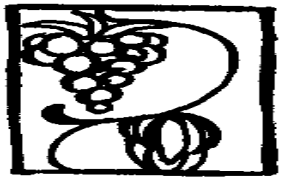
THE BRADFIELD GRAPEVINE



February 2025 No:232

Dear Neighbours,

I'm delighted to bring you the first issue of 2025! I hope everyone's year has started off well—January seemed to fly by with its typical cold and dull weather.

In this February issue, you'll find the usual articles and weather updates, plus some news around our community. Fingers crossed I've got the bin schedule right—please be kind!

We're excited to announce that the first phase of the village hall renovations is complete, so this means we can welcome back **KIT Café on February 15th** and **Whist Drive on February 7th**.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Debbie for her years of dedication to the Grapevine.

Thanks to all that have contributed to this issue and without further ado, let's dive into what's going on in our little corner of the world.

Margaret Lovick
Tel: 01284 386662

Sarah Pittard
Tel: 07816754163

Email: stclaregrapevine@gmail.com

A note from the new Editor

A couple of ciders down at the wonderful barn dance at Bishops Farm in September, I was talking to Margaret about how good it was to see so many people from St Clare and nearby villages gathered together. Moments like these only happen in a lovely community such as ours. We mentioned the importance of keeping these traditions alive, which led us on to the Grapevine. Learning it might stop, I felt it would be a shame and thought I'd give it a go. Next day, while out walking, it seemed the news had already spread. We made it official when Debbie, stuck in a 'traffic jam' behind a tractor, drove past, giving us time to confirm the handover. So, here I am, taking the baton from Debbie, who did an amazing job.

As a full time marketer, I hope to do the village proud and keep the Grapevine going. My partner Adam, a musician, and I have lived in the village for over 4 years now, though it feels like a blink of an eye, with Tommy, our cheeky cat. We enjoy local walks, rock and metal music, and going to gigs. Despite our sometimes hermit tendencies from mostly working at home, we like to try and make it to local events and are always up for a chat.

I look forward to working with Margaret and everyone who writes articles - I hope to do the village proud and keep the Grapevine going.

Save the date! Open Garden Event

One to get in your diary nice and early - St Clare Church is hosting an open garden / Jazz afternoon at The Lodge on **Sunday 15th June.** More details to come.

Letter from the Rectory

Dear Friends

I usually find February a bit trying – often it snows, its cold, and there still seems to be a lack of daylight.

Out of idle curiosity I googled February (other search engines are available!), and was furnished with a list of February celebrations, which included 'Random Acts of Kindness Day' which apparently happens this year on Monday 17 February. It is a day to encourage people across the world to choose kindness. We certainly could do with more kindness in many parts of our world, and for people to be a little more positive and tolerant.

When I take assemblies in school, the children often speak about Jesus as being 'kind', because they listen to the gospel narratives about him from the Bible. The gospel writers recorded the things that he did and said, and for a great deal of his ministry he was involved with helping people. People came to him with a problem, seeking a solution, or for healing. Compassion lay at the heart of everything that Jesus said or did.

It is Jesus' compassion for others that often converts people to Christianity. I can still remember the first time I read the Gospel of St Luke and was inspired to live my life following the example of Jesus. It has shaped my life in ways that I could never have imagined as a teenager, and serving others has become my vocation.

The research shows that if you are kind to others it can improve your mental and physical health as well as creating a more positive environment. So, I am resolved this year to be as positive as I can and spread the news that being kind is good for you! St Paul also knew this, as he lists kindness as being one of the fruits of the Spirit along with love, joy, peace and more. What's not to like?

Yours in Christ,
Sharon
Rector, Cockfield Benefice
revsharon2@gmail.com / 01284 828599 or 07825 086063

Cockfield Benefice Services and Events - February 2025

Sunday 2 February Candlemas	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Six2Seven - a talk on 'Tools with a Mission' by John Harper at Felsham Village Hall, all welcome
Sunday 9 February 4th before Lent	10am Morning Prayer - Cockfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St Clare 6pm Praise & Worship - Gt Whelnetham
Sunday 16 February 3rd before Lent	9.30am Morning Prayer - Stanningfield 10am Praise God Together - Felsham 10.30am Holy Communion - Cockfield 4pm Evening Prayer - Bradfield St Clare
Tuesday 18 February	11am Holy Communion - Felsham Village Hall (followed by soup and sandwiches)
Thursday 20 February	2-4pm Village Friends at Felsham Village Hall (over 65s friendship group)
Sunday 23 February 2nd before Lent	9.30am Communion - Gt Whelnetham 10am Holy Communion - Gedding 10am Worshipping Together - Bradfield St George
Sunday 2 March Next before Lent	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Six2Seven - Felsham Village Hall

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***

VILLAGE FRIENDS

An over 65's friendship group

The next meeting will be on
Thursday 20 February
at Felsham and Gedding Village Hall
This month we will be making pancakes!

If you would like to come please contact:
Canon Sharon 01284-828599 or 07825 086063
revsharon2@gmail.com
(drivers are able to provide lifts, just let Canon Sharon know)

Organised by the Cockfield Benefice

Do you have some time to spare and have a head for figures (and computers!)?

Bradfield St Clare Parochial Church Council is looking for a new **Treasurer.**

You do not need to be a member of the worshipping community as you can be co-opted onto the PCC. The PCC meets 4/5 times a year. For an informal chat if you are interested please contact Rev Canon Sharon Potter, revsharon2@gmail.com, 01284 828599 or 07825086063.

GATEHOUSE FOOD BANK

BURY ST EDMUNDS.

Firstly, may we thank the people from our village for their generous donations in the period leading up to Christmas. There were two main collecting points; the church porch and the box which is always put outside St Clare Cottage in the weeks before Christmas by Pat Hipwell. Both were used and a trip to Bury St Edmunds with several bags of groceries was made on 23rd December. The good people at Gatehouse were, as ever, grateful for this delivery.

We must make special mention of a donation of a different sort which was made at some time on January 3rd. This was an envelope left in our post-box with the word “foodbank” on the front. It contained a generous amount of cash – and nothing else. This has happened before. We do not know who you are, but thank you so very much. Cash is always welcomed by Gatehouse as it enables them to purchase whatever is needed and, of course, to help with the running of the premises. A receipt was obtained from Gatehouse for this donation.

The box outside St Clare cottage has now been put away until next year but there are still two collection points available: the one in the church porch and we also have one outside the front of our house, The Maltings, on Bury Road.

Many thanks once again for your continuing generosity.
Happy New Year
Clive and Sue Leal



YAY WE'RE BACK!

The first phase of our village hall improvements have been completed. The kitchen is twice the size and we should now be compliant with disability regulations with one disabled toilet and wider doors. We are hopeful that this will mean that the village hall can once again be used as a polling station for local and general elections. Soon we will be able to start on the second phase which is an outside storeroom and, funds permitting, an updated kitchen with more cupboard space.

Please come and join friends and neighbours (past and present) for coffee, tea, cakes and savouries. Pop in for five minutes or stay for the whole two hours. To keep our younger visitors amused while the grown-ups chat we have colouring books, games and pencils. If you are new to the village please pop along. You can be sure of a very warm welcome.

Our next opening will be: Saturday, 15 th February, 11 am – 1 pm

This café is FREE and OPEN TO EVERYONE

Donations of cakes or savouries would be much appreciated! It's always nice to see somebody turning up with a sample of their favourite recipe! Please ring Val on 07483245825 if you would like to become involved or help in any way.

Grit Bins - Update from Bradfield St Clare Parish Council

The Parish Council have recently installed three new grit bins in the village, to replace grit bins that had become damaged. We have ordered grit for the bins from SCC Highways. The grit is there for villagers to use in order to grit areas of road or footpath near the grit bins.

If a grit bin is becoming empty and needs refilling then please contact the Parish Clerk on 07817 170906 or preferably by email on bradfieldstclarepc@gmail.com giving the location of the grit bin that needs refilling, and we will arrange for the grit bin to be refilled.

Many thanks for your co-operation in this matter.
Bradfield St Clare Parish Council

Village Hall Whist Drive



With the village hall now up and running we are delighted to be able to restart our monthly whist drives.

Our next whist drive will be held on **Friday, 7th February at 7.30pm.** 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**.

We are a very friendly group and new players are always welcome. So if you enjoy playing cards please come along. We promise you will be made very welcome.

For further information ring Val Nunn on 07483245825.

Pat's Page

Decorated Christmas Trees - A great success; we had more than 20 wonderful, colourful trees submitted for our competition, sadly not many from the village, but nevertheless enough to decorate the church - it looked very bright and festive. The winners have been informed and rewarded!

Thanks for your generous support - The sale of marmalade and 'Christmas Puds' raised enough to reserve 3 places (£30 each) at CRISIS and £60 was donated to the Bury drop-in centre. Thank You letter will be displayed at Feb Kit Cafe.

Wanted! Someone brave enough to try and read my writing and spelling to help transcribe my "memoirs". Don't worry, I don't think it will be the publishing sensation of '25, nor do I suspect the team who draw up the 'Booker shortlist' need be concerned! Family and a few friends only involved. However, I've lived a long, nearly 93 years and fairly colourful life, and have decided to put pen to paper. I'm a total dinosaur; not only can I not use a computer, but I cannot type! I just want someone able to make some order of my rambling; of course they will be remunerated. PLEASE someone step forward! All very light hearted as you who have read my various articles in the Grapevine from time to time will realise.

And finally thank you to the kind souls who are kind enough to check up on me from time to time during this cold dark time - living on your own is not easy but I manage, but it's so heartening to know there are people looking out for me.

Thank you,

Pat Hipwell

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Bishops Farm – Feb 2025

After pondering what to write about for this issue and trying to get away from mentioning the wet weather again, or storm whatever we're in now; I thought I'd cover something a bit more academic this month about what happens when the cattle leave the farm for slaughter.

The EUROP cattle grading system is used to classify beef cattle based on their conformation (body shape and muscle development) and fat cover. The system is designed to provide consistency in beef quality across European Union countries, helping both producers and consumers. We still adhere to this grading system in the Uk since exiting the EU and the cattle that leave Bishops Farm are scrutinised in this way.

The system uses two key factors:

1. Conformation (Muscle Development)
This refers to the shape and development of the muscle, and cattle are graded from "E" (excellent) to "P" (poor), based on how well-muscled they are. The grading scale is:

- E – Excellent (very good muscle development)
- U – Very good
- R – Good
- O – Fair
- P – Poor (lacking muscle)

2. Fat Cover
The fat cover is graded on a scale from 1 (very lean) to 5 (very fat). This shows how much fat the animal has over its muscle.

- 1 – Very lean (little fat)
- 2 – Lean
- 3 – Average fat cover
- 4 – Fat
- 5 – Very fat (high fat cover)

The final grade is a combination of these two factors.

For example, a beef carcass could be graded R3 (Good conformation, average fat cover) or U2 (Very good conformation, leaner fat cover).

Why It Matters:

The grading system helps standardise beef quality across the EU, ensuring that consumers can expect a certain level of quality, and it gives farmers and processors a clear framework for determining the value of their cattle. The system also helps in determining pricing for beef which is represented in the example pricing chart below. As you can see, the system financially rewards farmers for producing good quality carcasses with a higher price per kg above the base price. The system also pays out a reduction in price per kg if the carcase grade is to lean, too fat or has poor conformation.

An example pricing grid for an abattoir, with premiums and penalties shown in p/kg

	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H
E	-10	+15	+20	+20	+15	-10	R
U+	-10	+15	+15	+15	+8	-15	R
-U	-15	+5	+5	+5	B	-20	R
R	-20	B	B	B	-5	-25	R
O+	-30	-10	-10	-10	-15	-30	R
-O	-40	-30	-20	-20	-30	-40	R
P+	-50	-40	-40	-40	-50	-60	R
-P	-70	-50	-50	-50	-70	R	R

B = Base price R = Realisation

The system we have developed for beef production here at Bishops Farm had many factors to consider when conceptualising.

From an agronomic perspective the objectives of reintroducing a livestock enterprise were primarily to build grazing and soil fertility leys into the rotation, increase nutrient cycling on the farm and reduce our reliance on manufactured fertiliser. Other factors to consider were workload, ease of handling and a cattle diet we could produce on the farm from our rolled combinable crops and grass. All these factors lead us down the ‘dairy beef’ route which are all calves born into a dairy herd with Angus paternal

genetics. This process means that the dairy cows can produce a viable beef calf due to the dominance of the Angus breed over Holstein.

Naturally with a cross of genetics our cattle will never make massive beef animals representative of the E and U grades in the chart above. These are really reserved for your pedigree beef animals such as the Limousin, Charolais, Angus and Hereford where conformation score is significantly higher due to their pedigree breeding. As you'll see in the chart it's still important for fat class to be managed through diet as high confirmation can still see a reduction in price if too fat or too lean.

Realistically the confirmation of a dairy x beef animal will be in the lower part of the table, and the latest batch to leave Bishops Farm all scored O+ 4L with just one scoring O+3 so we are absolutely hitting the prime target classification for the cross breed we are producing and thus accessing the highest potential price available to us under the confirmation and fat class grading system.

So a slightly different approach to this month's article from Bishops Farm! Farming is easy, hey…

Hopefully that's an understandable explanation into cattle grading for you. I expect to now see you all about the village in the coming months rounding up your cats, dogs, children and mother-in-laws and grading them according to confirmation and fat class…!

Tom Rouse
Dairy Farm House

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Bradfield Weather

Jan 2021	**Jan 2022**	**Jan 2023**	**Jan 2024**	**Jan 2025**
90mm	14 mm	79 mm	57 mm	30mm (to 23rd)
Annual total '20	**Annual total '21**	**Annual total '22**	**Annual '23**	**Annual '24**
689 mm	623 mm	443 mm	835.5mm	748.mm
27.1"	24.5"	17.5"	32.9"	29.4"
Jan 32yr average	**Jan Last 10yrs average**	**Annual 32yr average**	**Last 10yrs Annual av'age**	**Last 2yrs Annual av'age**
51.16mm	54.85 mm	619 mm	629 mm	791.75 mm
		24.3"	24.7"	31.17"

I have been crunching data and refreshing my very rusty Excel skills!

Our Bradfield weather records began in 1993 which means someone has been noting our rainfall for 32 years and we now have some meaningful data/patterns. Our 32 year annual average is 619 mm per year which is just over 24 inches. The past 10 yrs hasn't seen much change in annual totals but interestingly, in comparison to the 32yr average, the months of Jan-Mar have been wetter, April-Aug drier and Sept-Dec wetter. The last two years have had a significant increase in the total amount of rain – over 6 inches which may not sound a lot but it's a 25% increase in the 10 yr average of 24.7 inches.

In 2024 we had a maximum temperature of 35.4°C but very few days when Tom-over-the-road's weather station recorded sub-zero temperatures: -0.3°C in late Jan '24, about -1° in late Feb, a mere touch in late April and about -2°C in late November. The coldest weather for over a year was recently in January where we dropped to -6.3°C. We did, however, have a coolish spring where temperatures were persistently dropping to below 5°C during April which made getting veg going a frustrating process! The summer wasn't particularly glorious – I think we only ate outside a handful of times – but

rain came pretty regularly and as a result gardens were lush and some of our young trees put on some really good growth.

I've been writing this watching the news and seeing the dramatic scenes from N.Ireland where storm Eowyn brought a record gust of 114 mph today. For every 1° increase in global temperature the Jet Stream increases by 2% and this is what is leading to more storms. Eowyn has been our 5th named storm of the year but this time last year we were already up to the 9th (the storm season runs from September). So far in our corner of England we've got away lightly in terms of storms this season and I for one am hoping that continues for the next few months.

And all of this in a week when a climate change denier is once again in charge of the most powerful country in the world and plans to 'Drill baby drill'. Still, the snowdrops are up and causing me joy!

Alice Ward-Thomas Jan 24th – and thank you to Tom for providing the weather charts.

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The Library Van will call at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall from **9.40am until 9.55am** on the following dates:

	Wednesday 23 July
Wednesday 5 February	Wednesday 20 August
Wednesday 5 March	Wednesday 17 September
Wednesday 2 and 30 April	Wednesday 15 October
Wednesday 28 May	Wednesday 12 November
Wednesday 25 June	Wednesday 10 December

BIN COLLECTIONS

Wednesday 5 February	Blue Bin
Tuesday 11 February	Brown Bin
Wednesday 12 February	Black Bin
Wednesday 19 February	Blue Bin
Tuesday 25 February	Brown Bin
Wednesday 26 February	Black Bin

www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/bindays

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Christmas Quiz answers.

1. Germany

2. Eggnog

3. Four — the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Future, and Jacob Marley

4. An angel

5. Bethlehem

6. Tom Hanks

7. White

8. Hansel and Gretel

9. A German Lutheran pastor named Johann Hinrich Wichern

10. According to tradition, the original Saint Nicholas put gold coins in the stockings of three poor sisters

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