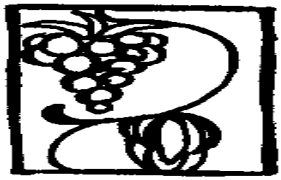
THE BRADFIELD GRAPEVINE



February 2026 No:243

Dear Neighbours,

Welcome back to the Grapevine and to our first issue of 2026!

We hope the year has started well for everyone and that you are settling into the months ahead. There are already some great village events to look forward to, including the hedgehog talk taking place in early March. Tickets are expected to go quickly, so please remember to book with Lorraine as soon as possible. In this issue we also have a report from Home Field, along with a look at the recent weather. As always, you will find a selection of other local news, updates and information from around the village.

We hope this edition helps you feel reconnected after the winter break and gives you plenty to look forward to over the coming weeks.

Margaret Lovick
Tel: 01284 386662

Sarah Pittard
Tel: 07816754163

Email: stclaregrapevine@gmail.com

Letter from the Rectory

Dear Friends,

Last month I wrote about the joys of Epiphany-tide, but very soon we will be in the season of Lent. We begin this with a service of Ashing and Communion at St Peter's in Cockfield at 11am in the morning. This service marks the start of the Lenten period, a time when we remember Jesus being led into the desert for forty days following his baptism. It is a time when Christians traditionally 'give up' something they normally indulge in. Many refrain from drinking alcohol or eating chocolate. If you've had a 'dry' January, you could continue alcohol-free during Lent!

The whole point of Lent is to get back to basics - being a *disciple* of Jesus Christ. In other words, bringing some *discipline* into our lives. It is easy for all who profess to follow Christ to forget Him in everyday living. I know that I certainly sometimes do, and I am grateful for this time in the year when I can re-focus my attention on my inner, spiritual life. It is a good time for listening and speaking to God, helping to reflect on all that we do and say.

I always find it fascinating to hear what our children have to say about Lent. Many of them talk about 'giving up' sweets and chocolate - but some of them mention reducing screen time (TV and video games). They particularly remember that Jesus was tempted during his time in the desert, and that they can give up things that they don't need. Isn't that a great lesson for adults? There are so many things that we think we need - whereas in fact there is very little that we *actually* need.

So this Lent I am encouraging everyone - whether they are a believer or not - to think about the things that are essential for living, and perhaps to live a simpler, less cluttered life. Who knows, it might help us all become healthier, happier people!

Yours in Christ

Canon Sharon

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

Cockfield Benefice Services and Events - February 2026

Sunday 1 February Candlemas	9.30am Morning Prayer at Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion at Bradfield St Clare 6pm 'Six2seven' at Felsham Village Hall with Hugh Morrison, author of the Rev Shaw mysteries - all welcome!
Saturday 7 February	2-4pm 'Knit'n'natter at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall All crafter/knitters/crocheters welcome!
Sunday 8 February 2nd Sunday before Lent	10am Morning Prayer at Cockfield 11am Holy Communion at Bradfield St George 6pm Praise & Worship at Gt Whelnetham
Tuesday 11 February	11am Holy Communion at Felsham Village Hall followed by soup and sandwiches
Sunday 15 February Sunday next before Lent	9.30am Holy Communion at Stanningfield 10am Praise God Together at Felsham Village Hall 10.30am Holy Communion at Cockfield 4pm Evening Prayer at Bradfield St Clare
Sunday 15 February	2-4pm Snowdrops & Aconites at West Lodge, Bradfield St George, IP30 0DL. Entry by donation, refreshments available, all welcome.
Wednesday 18 February Ash Wednesday	11am Holy Communion and Ashing service at Cockfield 5pm Holy Communion and Ashing service at Elmswell 6pm Holy Communion and Ashing service at Rattlesden
Thursday 19 February	2-4pm Village Friends (over 65s friendship group) at Felsham Village Hall. This month is pancake month!
Sunday 22 February First Sunday of Lent	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 19 February
2-4pm
at Felsham and Gedding Village Hall

This month we will be eating pancakes. Tea/coffee & other refreshments will be served.
All welcome!

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

Organised by the Cockfield Benefice

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



Our next opening will be:
Saturday, 21st February from 11 am – 1 pm

Tea, Coffee (as much as you can drink)

Cakes, biscuits, sausage rolls, scones

This café is FREE and OPEN TO EVERYONE
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.

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

For further information please contact Val on 07483245825.

Village Hall Whist Drive



Our next whist drive will be held on
Friday, 6th February

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.**

Our December's winner was Vera with 174 points and Jim kicked off the first whist drive of 2026 by being our January winner, again with a score of 174.

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.



Church Wardens Report

A belated Happy New Year from All at St.Clare Church. Hoping you all enjoyed the festive season however you celebrated.

St.Clare enjoyed a very busy, happy time with a series of Services from Carols to Crib to Communion. All were very well attended with lots of new faces and families. We hope those who came felt welcomed and inspired by our Services. Christmas gets very busy for us all so it's good to remind ourselves of the Christmas Story.

As we've entered 2026 so we have a slight pattern change for our 2 services each month. 11.00am Communion on the 1st Sunday and Evening Prayer on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Please take note there will be no Evening Prayer in February as Lynn and William Cardale are hosting 'Aconites and Snowdrops' at West Lodge, Bradfield St.George 2-4pm that day as a fund raiser for St.George. March Evening Prayer will be at 4pm and then from April at 6pm through the summer months. Occasionally through the year services change and we shall always aim to keep you informed. Check sign at entrance to Church Lane.

This leads on to our first FUNDRAISER of the year - come and learn all about hedgehogs at the same time as supporting Suffolk Hedgehog rescue and St.Clare Church. An informative, social evening with light refreshments, raffle and table top sale - please bring cash (Pay Bar takes card payment too). All St.Clare residents have received their invite, and publicity is around and about and elsewhere in The Grapevine - please contact Lorraine for tickets 07742151667 OR logmorley@yahoo.co.uk

Many thanks to our flower arrangers, who have received this year's Rota, to provide flowers for the 1st Sunday of each month but anyone else please feel free to add arrangements in between.

Enjoy February as the days begin to lengthen and the snowdrops, aconites and daffodils cheer us on our way.

Lorraine and Margaret

News from Home field



Starting with the sheep this month, the lambs (7) have all moved to pastures new. They had all self weaned off their mother's milk and were eating plenty of grass. Lucy (retired), Chicken, who didn't produce any milk for her twin lambs (both lambs died) were moved down the road away from the ram. We decided no more lambs for either of them. I suppose Chicken should eventually move on, but she is no real problem. Stephen made up the trio down the road. This left Lola, Egg and No7 at home to be put to the ram. After passing Debbie's “Are you a handsome boy” test, he arrived on 12th November for a month and quickly accepted his task. The lambs should be due first week in April. After the ram went home, the three ewes were moved down the road. Hopefully this will give Home field a rest for the sheep to return in March for lambing. With the recent inclement weather they are being supplemented with hay and sheep nuts.

Now to the allotment, which is very bare. I have planted one row of garlic, which I hope won't get flooded with the recent heavy rain. The allotment doesn't drain very well where they are planted (maybe a spring) but it's in my rotation.The sprouts failed, which meant no home grown sprouts for Christmas Lunch (I may not hear the last of that). Luckily we had carrots, cabbage, sweetcorn and red cabbage frozen, so some redemption. We had our first lettuce from the poly tunnel this week, it's one tiny lettuce per person, but it felt like a treat for a winter sandwich. I have planted broad beans in pots and will start another batch of lettuce seed with some onion seed ready for planting out after the last frost, or if I get impatient, the one before last. Our two chicken pullets have just started laying, six months after arriving as chicks looking for a new home. The third chick developed into a cockerel, so we don't hold out any hope of eggs from him 😂. Two out of three ‘’aint bad.

Top Tip:
Remove snow from car side windows manually on the outside. Pressing the electric window button results in window going down faster than you can stop the snow falling into the car. It seems even faster when one's seat belt is on and you end up with a lap full of snow.

Glyn






A few photos of Christmas at Bradfield St Clare - thanks to Debbie Thomas

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Bradfield Weather

Nov 2021	Nov 2022	Nov 2023	Nov 2024	Nov 2025
34 mm	109.5 mm	99 mm	42mm	120mm
Dec 2021	**Dec 2022**	**Dec 2023**	**Dec 2024**	**Dec 2025**
74mm	69 mm	78 mm	54 mm	34 mm

Annual total '21	Annual total '22	Annual '23	Annual '24	Annual '25
623 mm	443 mm	835.5mm	748.mm	505 mm
24.5"	17.5"	32.9"	29.4"	19.9"

33yr average annual rainfall is 615 mm or 24"
Last 10rs average annual rainfall is 622 mm or 24.5"
Last 5yrs Average annual rainfall is 631mm or 24.8"

Happy New Year to you all. Let us hope that 2026 is a year of perfect weather, with regular gentle rainfall and sunny days, no extremes of heat but some decent frosts before Spring really gets under way. It may be a little too much to hope for!

Our annual average rainfall appears to be steadily increasing, comparing our 33 yr average to the most recent 10yrs and 5yrs. However, I will certainly be the first to put my hand up to say that since we have been able to get accurate weather data from Tom-across-the-road's weather station, the figures have been more reliable than me remembering to check the plastic rain gauge, so the impression may be false.

What has certainly been true is a pattern of less rainfall over the summer months and more rainfall in winter. And this is what we must all pay attention to with regards to our gardening practices. Here are a couple of tips to consider for this year:

Collect rainwater if you can for use within the garden and pots etc – but always use clean water for seedlings to avoid risk of disease. If you're planning pots this year, consider planting more drought tolerant species. We should be thinking twice about using traditional bedding plants bought from garden centres – they have a very high carbon footprint. Shrubby salvias are pretty drought tolerant, have reasonable hardiness ratings and will provide colour for months on end. Pelargoniums (scented geraniums) will tolerate sun and heat very well in pots

but rather than chuck them out as winter approaches, try taking a few cuttings to provide plants for next year – they'll overwinter surprisingly well in a porch window.

I'm getting ahead of myself – it's only January! But I love this time of year, there's that wonderful switch in nature when the gentle senescence of Autumn changes to an upwards thrust of Spring. There's so much to plan and look forward to – I'm itching to start cutting back the borders but the overwintering insects will appreciate my will power to delay.

Our garden was featured on Gardeners' World Winter Specials Episode 3 and is still available on Iplayer, if anyone fancies a watch. But better still, please pop round and see it for yourself over the spring or summer!

Alice Ward-Thomas 26th January 2026

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MIDWEEK SPECIAL-HEDGEHOGTALK

Ticketed Event

£10

11 MARCH 2026

Afabulously entertaining and informative talk from **Suffolk HedgehogHospital volunteer, Lynda Brignall**, who rescues & rehabilitates sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs.

7pm for 7:30pmstart

St George Village Hall
Felsham Road
Bradfield St George
IP30 0AS

- **£10 per ticket**
- **Pay Bar**
- **Light Refreshments at interval**
- **Raffle**
- **Table top sale**
- **Signed books**



Contact Lorraine Morley
07742151667 or
logmorley@yahoo.co.uk

Joint fundraiser for St Clare Church and Suffolk Hedgehog Hospital

Library Van update

Unfortunately, due to the van rarely being used, the decision has been made to remove the stop at Bradfield St Clare.

However, the route 6 library bus still stops at Bradfield St George (Holly Bush Corner at 9:35 - 9:50) and Cockfield (Windsor Green (10:05-10:25) on the following days:

Wed 4 Feb 2026	Wed 22 Jul 2026
Wed 4 Mar 2026	Wed 19 Aug 2026
Wed 1 Apr 2026	Wed 16 Sep 2026
Wed 29 Apr 2026	Wed 14 Oct 2026
Wed 27 May 2026	Wed 11 Nov 2026
Wed 24 Jun 2026	Wed 9 Dec 2026

Contact: help@suffolklibraries.co.uk Telephone: 01473 35124

BIN COLLECTIONS

Wednesday 4 February	Blue Bin
Tuesday 10 February	Brown Bin
Wednesday 11 February	Black Bin
Wednesday 18 February	Blue Bin
Tuesday 24 February	Brown Bin
Wednesday 25 February	Black Bin

www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/binday

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Running for St Helena Hospice

This March, I am taking part in the **Colchester Half Marathon** with some of my colleagues at work and my partner, Adam, also running in support.

We're raising money for **St Helena Hospice**, which provides vital care and support to people with incurable illness, as well as their families across the Colchester area. The hospice means a great deal to our company, and we're proud to be supporting the work they do.

If any fellow villagers would like to sponsor us, I would be very grateful, although there is absolutely no pressure to do so. Any donation would be hugely appreciated.

You can sponsor using the QR code or link
https://www.justgiving.com/page/cdc2025

Thank you very much for reading, and for any support, encouragement, or good-luck wishes along the way if you see us out training! - Sarah Pittard

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
Bradfield 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	Father Sean Connolly 01284 754358

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

Contact Val Nunn for bookings (details above)