



**Edition
271**

CATFIELD NEWS

Your village magazine

March 2026



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YOU CAN drop your competitions entries and /or ***ANY*** correspondence into the **CATFIELD NEWS BOX** inside the Post Office, Special thanks to Vish & Karthi.

All submissions to be posted no later than the 10th of the month.

Please address your envelope to Catfield News

**If you would like to view the Catfield News online
it can be found on the
Parish Council website**

<https://catfieldparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>

Useful Local Contacts

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elainessmith364@btinternet.com

Catfield United Charities - Trustees 01692 660250
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Catfield Primary Academy - Emma Smithson, Senior Teacher
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Priest in Charge of The Waterside Benefice - Rev'd. Gary Noyes
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The Catfield News is an independent magazine with no affiliation to the Parish Council, Church or any other body. We are a self funded magazine, produced by a group of volunteers with the income from advertisers paying for the production costs.

Helpful Information

Staithe Surgery Stalham

www.staithesurgery.co.uk 01692 582000

Surgery Hours

Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm

Dispensary Hours

Monday to Friday 8.45am - 12.30pm
2.30pm - 5.30pm

Ludham Surgery

www.ludhamsurgery.nhs.uk 01692 678611

Surgery Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30am - 6.00pm

Wednesday 8.30am - 1.00pm

Dispensary Hours

Monday, Tuesday and Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm

Wednesday 9.00am - 1.00pm

Thursday 8.30am - 6.00pm

Stalham Green Surgery

www.ludhamsurgery.nhs.uk 01692 580880

Surgery Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8.30am - 6.00pm

Thursday 8.30am - 1.00pm

Dispensary Hours

Monday 8.30am - 6.00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm

Thursday 9.00am - 1.00pm

Local MP

Steffan Aquarone

Steff.aquarone.mp@parliament.uk

02072197585

Local County Councillor

Richard Carey Price

07880791258 (work hours)

Richard.price.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Local District Councillors

Kevin Terrance Bayes

kevin.bayes@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Matthew Taylor 07557097597

matthew.taylor@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Local Police

PC Matthew Pritty

Beat Manager

Hoveton Police Stn

Matthew.Pritty@Norfolk.Police.uk

What's on in Catfield during March

Indoor Cycling

Join us for an invigorating workout in Catfield village hall,

Thursday evenings 6.45pm to 7.30pm.

Bring a bottle of water and a small towel. You remain in control of your bike so you can set the resistance to the level that's right for you.

Then just cycle along to the music as the instructor guides you through the session.

Class costs £7 and pre booking is required.

Contact Sean Turner to book a bike.

M: 07928 585838 Email: ptseanio@yahoo.com

Catfield Higashi Karate Kai

Saturdays 9:00 to 11:00 am

Catfield Village Hall

For more info or to book please call Dave on 07515 256092

First Friday Coffee, Games & Chat

Friday 6th March 10.30am onwards

Come and join us for a coffee and chat and a game or two.
followed by a light lunch

This is a free event and all are welcome.

For more information contact Judith on 01692 615807

Catfield Stitching Group

Tuesday 10th & Tuesday 24th March

Catfield Village Hall, 2pm to 4pm

We are a friendly group of like minded people, all sharing different levels of experience. If you, like us, enjoy stitching and sharing creative ideas, we would love you to join us. Please bring your own project (embroidery, knitting, crochet, patchwork or creative sewing).

**Please contact Pat Reid 07906 097007
for more information. £2.00 per session.**

Tea, Coffee & Biscuits included

BINGO

Friday 20th March

7pm - Catfield Village Hall

What's on in Catfield during March

Catfield Crafters Wednesday 25th March 1pm—3pm Catfield Village Hall

At each meeting members share new ideas and techniques as well as making two card projects. All tools and materials are supplied. The subs for each session are £3.00 which includes refreshments. New members always welcome.

Contact Jennifer Banham on 01493 740560

Parish Council Meeting Catfield Village Hall Wednesday 25th March, 7.00pm.

Please check Parish Council website for Agenda.

<https://catfieldparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>

Other local events



NABS: Neatishead and Barton Society

The end of March sees an ambitious and exciting theatrical production coming to Neatishead, when NABS will be performing *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill. Considered one of the best plays of the 20th century, *Top Girls* will be performed at Neatishead Victory Hall on March 25th 26th 27th at 19.30. The Victory Hall is a bright and welcoming environment for all visitors with great parking and facilities, including a pre-performance and interval bar. Do please come and join us.

Tickets (£12) from ticketsource.co.uk/nabsboxoffice and Whitehouse Stores Neatishead.

Please note, the play contains a few examples of strong language.

Astronomy Night

The Colour Out Of Space, Why are Stars not just White.
Ingham Village Hall, Friday
27th March 7 for 7.30 pm.
Raffle and Refreshments
available.

£5 to book in advance £6 on
door.

Call Jan 07866 517668 to book.

All proceeds go to
Ingham Village Hall.

CATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2026

Public Update

- A parishioner asked to be allowed to speak on an Agenda item which was granted.

Councillors Bayes and Taylor Update

- The District Councillors did not attend the meeting but had provided a report. They are unhappy about the condition of the North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) owned industrial units in Catfield and are arranging a meeting to discuss this. They are also trying to have the mobile signal coverage in the area improved.

Councillor Price Update

- Councillor Price advised that Norfolk County Council (NCC) has 49m government funding for bus shelters and electric buses, but as not all bus routes are gritted, he is campaigning to improve this. Councillor Price confirmed that he was not involved in the bus stop repositioning and offered to chase NCC Highways as a matter of urgency. Although Councillor Price apologised to the Parish Council (PC) for comments that he had made to external bodies regarding the PC's protocol for engaging with parishioners, the PC requested that he also retract those comments. Councillor Price agreed that he would email the external bodies. Councillor Edwards requested that a draft of the email be sent to the PC before being sent out. Councillor Price also advised that the government would confirm the details of the Local Government Review in February and confirmed that he and NCC are in favour of a unitary authority. The PC are unanimously opposed to this. He also stated that the Conservatives wanted the local elections to proceed.

Planning

- **Store Galore – Appeal against conditions imposed on retrospective planning permission**

Councillor Harris read out an email update from Councillor Bayes. The owner of the site, who was present at the meeting, stated that the email was factually incorrect. He stated that a camera had been installed by another person and not the company's owner. He also stated that he had knowledge of only one incident of outside hours usage since enforcement action had taken place. The owner also queried why the PC would want to make representations on the appeal. Councillor Briscoe advised that the PC could make representations and it would be up to the Planning Inspector as to whether they were accepted. The clerk will check the Start Date for the appeal.

- **PF/25/2396 – Church Cottage, School Road – Erection of detached outbuilding within the grounds of the dwelling**

Councillor Harris stated that the application appeared to have been removed from NNDC's planning website. Councillor Jordan checked this during the meeting and confirmed that the details had been removed. The clerk will write to NNDC to ask why the application had been removed.

- **Any other planning matters**

On the day of the meeting the PC had received a planning application for the erection of up to 10 dwellings on land south of Lea Road. The clerk had requested an extension of time for the PC to make representations, and this had been granted. The application will be discussed at the February meeting.

Highways and Road Safety

- **Parish Partnership Scheme Bus Shelter Application**

This had been discussed under Councillor Price's Update (see above). A letter had been sent to the MP regarding this matter, but no response had been received.

(contd)

- **Other Highways and Safety Matters**

Councillor Harris advised that the drainage works at Elderbush Lane had begun and road closures are in place. Councillor Bacon advised that the plan shows that the layby will be retained and is owned by NCC. Councillor Bacon to write to NCC regarding this.

Councillor Edwards had been contacted by a parishioner regarding an overgrown hedge encroaching onto the footway on School Road, making it impassible for wheelchairs and prams. Councillor Edwards to provide Whats3Words and the clerk to report to NCC Highways.

Budget and Precept 2026/2027

Prior to the meeting, various options had been provided to the PC by the clerk. Councillor Edwards explained that he had negotiated further reductions for the new playground, and the total cost is now expected to be in the region of £50,000 .

The PC have been fortunate to receive £22,000 in grants and £1,000 from CAT, and with existing PC funds this leaves a shortfall of £17,500. If the PC do not proceed with the project, the grant funding will have to be returned. Therefore, it was agreed that a one-off, larger precept increase to £37,000 is essential to complete the project. This relates to an average household monthly increase of £2.75. The PC agreed to accept the Budget and Precept. The clerk to confirm the precept to NNDC. Councillor Edwards to draft an article for Catfield News setting out in detail the rationale for the budget and precept. The Councillors thanked the clerk for her hard work in preparing the very clear information. Councillor Briscoe advised that the defibrillator in the village will be due for replacement next year. Councillor Edwards offered to help fundraise to cover the cost of £1,200.

Environmental

- **Catfield Action Team**

Councillor Briscoe led the PC's tribute to Edwina Simpson, who died on Christmas Eve. She will be sadly missed. Everyone agreed that she had worked tirelessly to make the group the success that it is. Councillor Briscoe also advised of upcoming CAT events.

- **Lighting around/next to FloGas**

Councillor Harris advised that the PC had received a letter from FloGas confirming the solutions that they have implemented to resolve the lighting issues on the site. The PC agreed that these have made a significant difference. It was also confirmed that the nearby landowner had no lights that would affect Catfield. A letter will be sent to FloGas thanking them for the work that has been done to resolve the lighting issue.

- **Other Environmental issues**

Councillor Bacon had reviewed the information for the Broads Consultation and was concerned about the accuracy of the maps provided. He had found about a dozen errors. Councillor Bacon will draw up a list of all the mistakes, and the clerk will send these to the Broads Authority. Councillor Bacon also advised that a converted bus on Plumsgate Road appears to have been inhabited since December 2025. The clerk will write to NNDC and copy in Sutton Parish Council, due to the location of the bus.

Village Hall

- **Recreation Ground**

The letter to NNDC regarding the section 106 monies from Milestones had been drafted by Councillor Briscoe but had not yet been approved. A small amendment to the letter was agreed and the clerk will send the amended letter. Councillor Edwards advised that he had meetings booked with the playground equipment suppliers. It was agreed that Councillor Edwards provide photos of the equipment and with the help of Councillor Johnson, ask the schoolchildren for their input.

- **Village Hall Renovations**

Councillor Roberson advised that after obtaining quotes, the Village Hall Management Committee had agreed to new windows for the toilet and storage area and for a new, larger front door. It was also agreed that alterations should be made to the storage area and for the slabs outside the front door to be changed.

- **Arrangements for management of Village Hall**

Councillor Briscoe advised that if the PC wanted to have the advice of Community Action Norfolk, it would have to join the organisation. It was agreed that the PC would pay the joining fee. Councillor Johnson to register the PC with Community Action Norfolk.

Correspondence

- **Pesticide Spraying in Catfield**

Councillor Harris advised that constructive correspondence had been received confirming that inappropriate spraying had taken place. No further action.

- **Complaint regarding a fire on 12th December 2025**

The parishioner involved in the complaint was present at the meeting. The parishioner was adamant that the smoke from the fire on this day could not and did not blow in the direction of Elderbush Lane. The Parish Councillor who had received the initial complaint regarding the fire and the parishioner who was present at the meeting had both provided written summaries of their communications on the matter. Councillor Harris proposed, as the correspondence was clear, that it be noted that the Parish Councillor's action was correct and no further action was needed.

- **Website video promoting Tesco Blue-Token Scheme**

Councillor Briscoe advised that she had received a query about the video. The AI software had been provided by Tesco and the PC were agreed that it was satisfactory to proceed with the video.

Quotes for Works

- Various quotes had been requested for Grass Cutting, the Sandholes Tree Survey and the Football Field Hedge Cutting. Quotes were accepted for the Grass Cutting and the Tree Survey. However, no quotes had been received for the Football Field. Due to the timing of nesting birds, Councillor Harris offered to speak to his workers to check if they are available to do this work. There would be no charge to the PC.

Catfield News

- The PC had been supplied with information about the magazine's finances. The PC discussed the issue of the shortage of income and revenue. It was agreed that the people running the magazine did very good work but more business from advertising was needed. The PC are very supportive of the magazine and thanked the organisers for their analysis. Councillor Plowman offered to contact the Secretary of the magazine and to help with the task of obtaining more revenue.

Catfield United Charities

- Councillor Dr Harris confirmed that they had had their last meeting with Mr Reed as Trustee and thanked him for his service. The election of new trustees will take place at the February meeting of the PC.

**PLEASE REFER TO THE WEBSITE FOR FULL DETAILS
OF MEETING MINUTES**

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IS 25th February 2026



Precept Explanation

When your Parish Council conducted a survey back in 2021 seeking views and suggestions from parishioners on what they'd like to see done to enhance and improve village facilities and amenities, three topics clearly topped the list by some considerable margin. They were the condition of the Village Hall, the absence of bus shelters and the steady decline of the village children's playground facilities.

Last year the Parish Council was able to take advantage of some grant funding opportunities on offer from the County Council as part of a government financed bus stop improvement programme. This has allowed for the provision of the recently installed bus shelter outside the Village Hall, the improvements to the surrounding pavement together with the provision of a drop-down kerb on the opposite side of the road to improve disabled user access. We were also able to link provision of the disabled parking bay to the same project which was largely funded by a grant facilitated by our County Councillor from his personal discretionary budget. All these works required only a small percentage contribution from Parish Council funds collected from the council tax precept. Further generous grant funding has been offered for a second bus shelter for the opposite side of the road planned to be installed on the original bus stop site, which is to be rebuilt by the County Council at no cost to the village. For those who may rightly be wondering why this site is being rebuilt so soon after it was moved and reconstructed opposite the Village Hall last year there is a simple answer. It has been confirmed by NCC that the contractors carried out this work in error so there will be no impact on parish funds.

You will have noticed the Village Hall now has a new roof, which was the first step in an ongoing programme of upgrades to the building. Work will soon begin on a new front door which will improve access, particularly for wheelchair users. Other works will follow as funds permit. All these improvements have been funded at no cost to the council taxpayers, by the Village Hall Management Committee, an independent body, from a combination of grants and many years of fundraising activities. This small committee deserve recognition for their efforts, together with one of our councillors who, with many years construction industry experience and contacts, was able to offer valuable guidance and help to ensure engagement with reliable and trusted contractors and value for money.

Lastly, the playground. The present installation has served us well for some thirty years but is unfortunately struggling to satisfy current safety requirements or indeed look particularly attractive to those it is intended to serve. With the exception of the slide, it is planned to replace all the other equipment and enhance the area into a family orientated facility with modern apparatus and picnic tables. Sadly, projects such as these do not come cheap. So far, around 2/3 of the estimated total cost of £50,000 has been raised, including a maximum allowable £20,000 from the National Lottery. We have reached the point where all other grant funding opportunities have been explored and time is no longer on our side, since if work does not begin by Spring, it is likely the Lottery Fund will want their money back and the
(cont'd)

project would have to be cancelled. The Parish Council has therefore decided to meet the shortfall by increasing the parish precept beyond the customary amount required to meet the rising costs of the services we have to provide, to raise the required funds. Although this exceptional increase in the precept for 2026/2027 will be £11,800 the formula by which council tax charged by N.N.D.C. is calculated means the increase in costs to the average household will be around a modest £3 per month. The Parish Council's intention is that this increase will be a 'one-off', meaning after next year, ongoing precept levels should return to customary levels. We know we cannot please everybody but hopefully most will understand and sympathise with our decision.

CATFIELD PARISH COUNCILLORS

Keith Bacon	01692 581314	keithbacon@broadland.net
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Jennifer Harris	07842 553478	jenben.harris@gmail.com
Tim Harris (Chairman)	01692 580220	tim.catfieldpc@gmail.com
Angie Johnson	07770 581706	angiejohnson4@hotmail.com
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Polly Plowman		pollyplowman80@gmail.com
Ian Roberson	07876 193547	robey6815@gmail.com
Scott Snelling	07522 238858	scott.catfieldpc@gmail.com
Glen Bunting	07799 216533	gbunting50@gmail.com
Clerk of Parish Council	07555197530	catfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com

Parish Council website <https://catfieldparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>

All current Catfield Parish Councillors reside in Catfield and have been democratically elected. All Cllrs are happy for you to contact them at the above details.

The Mobile Library will visit Catfield on Tuesday 17th March

Thorn Road - 14:35 - 14:55

Village Hall - 15:00 - 15:20

Who killed the Post Mistress?

Well, some of the teams at the murder mystery evening managed to find the killer but not the accomplice as an interwoven plot unfolded on stage in Catfield Village Hall. The usual characters several of whom are committee members of the Village hall took their roles and played their parts seriously and after the second act teams were given the time not only to enjoy a meal but to impress the markers giving their reasons for their solution to the murder.



Thank goodness we don't rely on their skills in real life! several innocent people would find themselves arrested and charged for a murder they did not commit. A fun evening was had by players and audience and we thank those who came for their support in raising £212 after expenses for Village Hall funds.

Is there any craft club or crafter that would like
some metal crafting dies. I have thinned my collection out
and would like to give them away.

They consist of Tattered Lace, Sue Wilson and Tonic.

Please ring Joan Smith on 07366139044

Advertising space available in the Catfield News

For just £50 p.a. you can place a business card size advert
in the magazine for a year. Larger spaces are available if required.

We would love to help promote local businesses by advertising them in the magazine,
and if you do you will be supporting your local magazine
as the income from advertisers pays for the printing cost.

The magazine is delivered free to every house in Catfield and is
produced by a small team of volunteers.

If you are interested in placing an advert please contact

stevebeckley1@gmail.com or

secretarycatnews1@btinternet.com

The Catfield News Team need you

We are looking for a couple of people to help with the production of the magazine.

Roles within the team are secretary, editor, accounts and advertising.

If you feel you could help in any of these roles, or would just like to find out a little
more please contact secretarycatnews1@btinternet.com

WHERRY YACHT CHARTER INTRODUCES TEA AT TWILIGHT AS PART OF 2026 SAILING PROGRAMME

Wherry Yacht Charter will be launching its summer season on 1st May 2026 with an expanding variety of sailing experiences, including a new Tea at Twilight sail.

Customers can experience a magical 3 hour trip sailing towards sunset on the beautiful Norfolk Broads... a quieter, relaxing time of day, all whilst enjoying delicious tea and homemade cakes.

The first Tea & Twilight trips leave from Wroxham at 4pm on the following dates:

Thursday 21st May

Tuesday 9th June



Other trips include sailings whilst enjoying morning or afternoon tea and cakes and the much in demand fish and chip supper at Wroxham Yacht Club.

For nature lovers there are several sailings which stop at a nature reserve only accessible by river and other trips include a visit to the Museum of the Broads.

People who just want to relax and enjoy the beautiful views and wildlife on the Norfolk Broads are also catered for with many day sails setting out from Wroxham, How Hill, and some from Ranworth and Stalham.

An ever popular highlight in the schedule are the full day sailings including a delicious buffet-style lunch and snacks on Hathor, the flagship Egyptian themed pleasure wherry.

The charity also organises a programme of free events including musical performances at How Hill where Hathor is moored from 1st May to 30th September and open to the public for guided tours during the summer months.

Day trips and charters are the main source of income for WYC which restores, maintains and operates five of the remaining eight wherries in the world.

Visit www.wherryyachtcharter.org for more details and to book a wherry trip or charter.

WYC Trustee Judith Keogh says:

“We are looking forward to yet another successful sailing season with an even wider range of trips and events on offer than ever before.

As a volunteer-led organisation we are always looking for more people to join us and with a busy summer ahead there are plenty of volunteer roles available for anyone wishing to get involved with our charity to help us “Keep History Sailing”.”

To find out more Judith can be contacted by emailing: jk@wherryyachtcharter.org

Oyster Mushroom

On a local walk in around Catfield we spotted this fungi growing from a sycamore tree, it struck me as interesting growing from a gap in the trunk, so I photographed it.

Whilst difficult to identify as there are similar types it would appear to be an oyster mushroom, which inhabits forests throughout the world. Whilst working on a North Walsham estate I often saw this type of fungus on beech trees.

The oyster mushroom is widespread on many temperate and subtropical deciduous trees, and beech trees in particular.

The oyster mushroom can be found in many habitats, year round whilst some related species (e.g. the branched oyster mushroom) grow only on trees. While this mushroom is often seen growing on dying hardwood trees, it only appears to be acting as an opportunist rather than parasitically as the tree dies of other causes, it then grows on the rapidly increasing mass of dead and dying wood.



They actually benefit the forest by decomposing the dead wood, returning vital elements and minerals to the ecosystem in a form usable to other plants.

The oyster mushroom is a choice food in some cultures. Oyster mushrooms are used in contemporary cuisine in soups and stews in a similar fashion to meat, as well as breaded to become a vegetarian alternative in Polish dishes. It is common to find street food vendors selling crispy deep fried oyster mushrooms, also being frequently served on its own, in soups, stuffed, or in recipes. Oyster mushrooms may be used in sauces, the mushroom's taste has been described as mild with a slight odour and it is best when picked young; as the mushroom ages, the flesh becomes tough and the flavour becomes acrid.

Although I have often picked and eaten edible mushrooms anything unknown is risky. I have seen someone suffering from mushroom poisoning, it was not pleasant.

Alec Nisbet



All Saints Church, Catfield and the other churches in the Benefice March Services

Sunday 1st March	10am	Benefice Holy Communion	Potter Heigham
Thursday 5th March	7pm	Sung Compline	Ludham
Sunday 8th March	10am 10am	Joint Morning Worship Holy Communion	Catfield Ludham
Thursday 12th March	7pm	Sung Compline	Ludham
Sunday 15th March	10am 10am	Joint Holy Communion Morning Worship	Catfield Ludham
Thursday 19th March	7pm	Sung Compline	Ludham
Sunday 22nd March	10am 10am	Passion Sunday Holy Communion Morning Worship	Potter Heigham Ludham
Sunday 29th March	10am 11am	Joint Service with Methodists Palm Sunday Special Service with Donkey	Ludham Church Catfield
Holy Week			
Monday 30th March	7pm	Compline	Catfield
Tuesday 31st March	7pm	Compline	Potter Heigham
Wednesday 1st April	7pm	Compline	Ludham
Thursday 2nd April	7pm	Maundy Thursday Compline	Ludham
Friday 3rd April	12 noon	Benefice Walk of Witness with Ludham Methodists	Ludham
Sunday 5th April Easter Day	10am	Benefice Holy Communion	Ludham

An Invitation to Wonder.

In conversation with someone recently I was asked about my values and beliefs. I mentioned that I am a Christian, they replied “I’m more of a science person myself...”. It intrigues me that the idea still exists whereby science and Christianity are mutually exclusive. That, somehow you must park your brain at the church door on your way in and collect it again on your way out! Clearly this is a topic too vast to explore in the Catfield News. However, it bears thinking about, and putting our emotions to one side as we do it. I am currently reading a book called ‘God, The Science, The Evidence’ by scientists Michel-Yves Bolloré and Olivier Bonnassies. In it they write “Our ability to accept a claim, scientific or otherwise, depends on more than rational evidence. Our emotions also come into play when we evaluate a claim and its conclusions.

Some questions science asks today are emotionally neutral—why the dinosaurs went extinct, the origin of the moon, how water on Earth came to be, or why the Neanderthals suddenly disappeared. Of course, these questions spark lively debate among scientists, who argue for differing, even opposing, solutions. But in the end, everyone accepts the results of their intellectual efforts since these subjects do not tend to bring our emotions into play.

All that changes as soon as we step onto more delicate ground. Issues like global warming, the environment, nuclear energy, and Marxist economics certainly demand scientific answers, but these topics are so politicised that our intellects are not free to think about them in a normal way. Our passions, political opinions, and self interest get in the way of our reason. The phenomenon is particularly acute when one broaches the subject of the existence of God, because what is at stake is not just some point of scientific data but the very meaning of our life. The prospect of having to recognise, at the end of a long search, that they are creatures created by and dependent upon a creator is seen by many as a fundamental threat to their autonomy and freedom.

For many people, the desire to be free and autonomous, to be able to determine their course of action entirely on their own with "neither God nor master," takes precedence over everything else. Their inmost self recoils from this idea of God: to defend itself, it mobilises all its intellectual resources to oppose the search for truth and to protect its own perceived independence and freedom. It is not surprising, then, that instead of stimulating thoughtful discussion, the subject often provokes reactions ranging from annoyed indifference to ridicule”.

I invite you to wonder...

Stephen Pitkethly AWA

BROADLAND MODEL RAILWAY CLUB



The new year is well under way and we hope it will see us continue to grow and to exhibit more of our efforts in creating model railways.

We are very pleased to have potential new members applying to join, they are always welcome as they always provide new ideas and experience and widens our capabilities. The various teams are very busy with updates and construction on a number of our layouts and we are looking at some ideas for new layouts. Our challenge as always is finding room for them but with some carefully juggling of the space and learning how to work with layouts which are partly stored away, we are coping quite well. As ever, you can follow our progress via the website, each layout has its own page and we update this formally after every quarterly meeting. We also have an active Facebook page where more frequent updates are posted - www.facebook.com/BroadlandMRC/ and we welcome followers to this. We are very fortunate in having 24/7 access to our club rooms, something few other clubs have and a number of us take advantage to work in a group or alone outside our regular sessions on a Tuesday and Friday evenings. Full members have keys so they can gain access at any time. A regular group meet on Mondays, splitting the day's modelling activities with lunch in the Swan Inn in Stalham, a very enjoyable day with good friends.

Our exhibition calendar is already growing, please check it out on the website as it is constantly under review. Do please note that we are open to invites from other exhibitions to display our layouts, contact details are on the exhibition page. As always if you are interested in joining us and getting involved, full contact information is on the website:

<https://broadlandmodelrailwayclub.co.uk/>

CATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL NEEDS YOUR HELP

To help Catfield Parish Council obtain some funding toward refurbishing the Children's Playground, shop in Stalham's (NR12 9AE) Tesco store from mid-January 2026 until the end of March 2026 and cast your 'Stronger Starts' token for Catfield.

To vote, you will need to make a purchase of any value within store. You will receive one token per transaction.

See in store for full Terms & Conditions

CATFIELD



YARD SALE

SUNDAY

19th APRIL

9^{am}
to 1^{pm}

Get ready to turn your "clutter" into someone else's "must-have" treasure!

The Catfield Yard Sale is officially on the horizon, and it's the perfect excuse to finally tackle that cupboard under the stairs or the "mystery boxes" in the garage. Whether you're hunting for a vintage bargain or looking to reclaim your floor space, this is the community event of the season.

Fancy taking part? registration is simple...

1. Pop in to The Crown Inn *from 1st March till 16th April.*

2. Register your address and mark your spot on the village map.

3. Pay your £5 seller's fee. It's a small investment for a big Spring clear-out, and as always, your support helps the Catfield Action Team keep our village blooming and vibrant.





CATFIELD SPRING CLEAN UP!

**SUNDAY
1st MARCH
@ 2pm**

Meet at Catfield Village Hall from 2pm
All welcome, come for half hour or as long as you like.
Litter pickers & bin bags will be supplied. Please bring your own gloves.

**LET'S CLEAN UP CATFIELD
ONE PIECE OF LITTER AT A TIME!**

An event organised by Catfield Action Team. Contact CAT at catfieldactionteam@gmail.com

"The Catfield Ceilidh"
with
The Occasional Ceilidh Band
and caller, Rod Purdy
7th March 7.30-10.30 pm
Catfield Village Hall



**Tickets £12 to include supper
and legendary puddings!**

Raising funds for All Saints Church, Catfield

For catering purposes, please pre-book
tickets from Monica/Barry
Tel: 01692 581587

The Third Tuesday Open Mic

17th March

**7.30pm at
Catfield Village Hall,
The Street, Catfield, NR29 5AA**

If you have a song to sing, an instrument to play,
come along to our informal Open Mic night
-we want to hear you!
PA. mics and music stands provided.
If you just want to listen,
no problem just come along.



Entry £3.

*Bring your own drinks and nibbles
Sorry no backing tracks*

Hosted by Kim Brett

BINGO

7pm @ Catfield Village Hall

FRIDAY 20th MARCH

An event organised by

Any enquiries call
07443
470065

£6 Raffle & Refreshments available during Interval • Cash prize on last game!

DONATIONS REQUEST for Yard Sale & Garden Sale



Spring Cleaning? We've Got Just the Spot for Your Unwanted Treasures!

As the village starts to bloom, the **Catfield Action Team** is gearing up for two of our favourite spring events! If you've been tackling a bit of "early spring cleaning" or thinning out your seedlings, we'd love to take those extras off your hands to help raise funds for our upcoming community projects.

We are busy gearing up for our upcoming

Yard Sale on Sunday 19th April and Plant Sale on Sunday 17th May

and we're on the hunt for donations to help make our village even greener and more vibrant!

Catfield Yard Sale: *We are hunting for good quality items in good, saleable condition.*

Think of things like: **Books & Tools • Bric-a-brac & Kitchenware • Small Furniture or Trinkets**
(Please note: We are **not** able to take clothing for this event!)

Catfield Plant Sale: *Calling all green thumbs! If your garden is overflowing, we'd love donations of:*

• **Seeds & Spare Plants • Gardening Books & Cookery Books • Garden Tools & Pots**

Need a hand? Don't worry about lugging heavy boxes to us
we are more than happy to come and collect your donations!

To arrange a pickup or ask a question, simply email or phone...

Email: catfieldactionteam@gmail.com • **Phone:** 07443 470065



NWT Hickling Broad and Marshes



As I write in mid-February the threat of another flurry of snow showers is imminent. To date the county has avoided most of the precipitation that has cursed much of the north and west of the UK since the New Year. Skies remain leaden for the moment, but there is now a clearly perceptible increase in daylight hours at both ends of the day as the Vernal Equinox grows ever closer.

Wintering wildfowl numbers have been boosted by an influx of geese from Europe as temperatures in the north have plummeted. Whilst good numbers of Tundra bean geese and some barnacle geese have arrived, the main contenders for bird of the month are the Russian (or European) white-fronted geese that have arrived in large numbers all over the county.

Another bird recently arrived in their thousands is the lapwing. Formerly known as the green plover, and once a widespread farmland breeder, this species has more vernacular names than most UK birds. They include horn-pie, peewit, pie-wipe, flapjack and tyrwhitt, all of which conjure up either the pied plumage, the broad-winged floppy flight, or the magical tones of the call. The very name lapwing is believed to derive from the Olde English *hleapewince*, meaning literally 'a leap with a waver in it', a perfect description of the mesmeric display flight. The plumage of these birds is of course not simply pied, but glows iridescently from green to deep-blue to violet in the refracted light of the spring sunshine.

At Hickling our Winter Boat Trails continue this month. If you wish to join us on any events pre-booking is required, details can be found on our website at www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

John Williamson- Senior Boat Operator NWT Hickling Broad and Marshes.

Farming News

Sugar beet crop has been harvested, clamped and carted, a mechanical brush worked all day to ensure the roads were kept clean. It turned out that the deer hadn't done too much damage to the roots- they were just pre-topped for the harvester. Given a Summer with minimal rainfall the sugar beet at Catfield have performed financially, which surprised me as they cost a lot to grow. The sheep grazing on the cover crop are slowly getting through it. There is a lot of food on that field and it attracting red deer at night as well. Winter ploughing has been delayed due to the various options of winter cover. Winter cover in SFI can be ploughed 6 weeks before the next crop is drilled, over-wintered stubbles in Mid-Tier stewardship can be ploughed from mid-February, game cover can be topped after the game shooting season (1st February onwards) and Winter bird food mixes in SFI can be ploughed after 1st March- although I'll probably leave mine till next year. Land that is having Spring Barley after Sugar beet is mostly ploughed or cultivated after sugar beet are lifted. We might be waiting some time for the land to dry to enable spring barley to be drilled.

All the Autumn fertilizer and ground chalk has been applied to 2026 sugar beet land and I'm beginning to think about Nitrogen/Sulphur fertilizer for winter cereals. Also, after my success killing moss on a lawn with Nitrogen/Sulphur last year, I might try some on a field scale to kill the moss in a grass field.

I've been watching the Winter Olympics, particularly the event where the Olympians have their feet strapped to a snow board then descend down a ski jump to launch themselves as high as possible, do some trick moves and land without coming a cropper. The winner appears to be the competitor who comes closest to death. There are some similarities here to contract farming. Contractors are rising to new heights with ever more expensive kit, then suddenly they crash as the crops fail and the price is well below the cost of production. Many Midland contractors on difficult soils have packed up, one wonders how contractors on light land in North Norfolk and Breckland can keep going without Government intervention.

February is time for the GWCT Big Farmland Bird Count (not to be confused with RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch). It will be interesting to see what birds are on the farm this year with the blocks of cover in SFI in place. I've got my binoculars ready and my "know your farmland birds" booklet and even an app on my phone that listens for birds when I can't see them. I'll report in next month as to what birds are about.

I thought sea level rises were about to flood Broadland, the salt was going to kill everything, but Nature has surprised us. The sea at Yarmouth has retreated, Scroby Sands are visible, the rain has washed the salt out of the rivers. What was the worry? Lambing started last evening with a single and a set of twins. All my help seems to have evaporated so its early mornings and late night for me for the next month.

For 3 months we have had a series of incidents of people coming onto the farm with dogs to chase the birds off the farm and towards a line of shooters. These people do not have permission to do this and we will be taking action to ensure this does not happen again. We go to great lengths to provide habitats and food for small birds, particularly English Partridges which is why I get upset with these people who are only doing this for financial gain.

AWA 10.2.2026

How Hill Trust News

Education team

As winter loosens its grip, the Norfolk Broads begin to stir with new life. March marks a turning point in the landscape, where the first true signs of spring emerge across the waterways, reedbeds, and woodland. Migratory birds return to the Broads, filling the skies and reedbeds with sound and movement. Resident species such as bitterns and marsh harriers become more active. Otters, now well established in many parts of the Broads, can sometimes be seen in the early morning light. March on the Norfolk Broads is a month of anticipation and renewal. School groups have been walking through the nature reserve watching birds from the hides and exploring nature through our activities. We have lots of new schools joining us for day visit and learning all about heritage and conservation in the broads.

30th March Birds, Buds and Blossoms. Join us for a walk around the How Hill Gardens and estate to delight in the new buds and blossoms emerging as spring bursts into life. We will also visit a bird hide and take time to identify some of our water-fowl. Fun for all ages! Booking essential via our Ticket Source page: www.ticketsource.co.uk/how-hill-trust Both event are £7.50 per person

Adult Visitors

Spring is the start of a busy season at How Hill. February sees us welcome the Upton Quilters back again and looking in to March we have a yoga group and several adult birthday meals as well as the Wymondham Lacemakers staying sandwiched between school residentials.

We successfully applied for a grant last year enabling us to replace the toilets which we open to the public from Easter to the end of October. These should be full installed and operational by the end of March. We have plans to repurpose the previous toilet in the Secret Gardens, replacing the shed just inside the entrance which was destroyed in a storm in the Autumn of 2025.

Upcoming Events

10th March Boats Trip and Breakfast Bap This one is an early start. Out on the boat just after dawn to catch the quiet of the Spring morning and the dawn chorus, followed by a sausage bap breakfast back at the house. £40 per person.

17th to 18th March Birds by Boat. Explore the wildlife before dusk on 17th and catch the early dawn chorus on the 18th. Dinner, bed and breakfast is included. £200 per person.

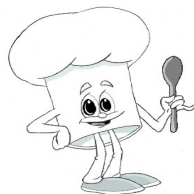
Booking is essential for all our adult events. For more information contact our office tel. 01692 678555 or email secretary@howhilltrust.org.uk

Friends of How Hill

The Friends of How Hill are an independent charity who raise funds to help support the How Hill Trust. Membership is from just £10 per year and provides regular newsletters, Friends only events and discounts off of residential courses. Details by email from friendsofhowhill@yahoo.com. The Friends also arrange various events on our behalf starting with:

25th April The Magic of the Musicals by Jane Hoggar. Jane will perform in her own inimitable humour and energetic fashion the Magic of the Musicals with costume, song and dance. The performance lasts around 1 hour followed by a question and answer session. Afternoon tea is provided to round off this event. Details and booking via Jeanne Flett: Tet: 01692 678560, email mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com or online: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/friends-of-how-hill>

Chef's Specials



Rhubarb and Custard Slice

Ingredients

150g unsalted butter, chopped, at room temperature
165g caster sugar
200g plain flour
4-6 rhubarb stalks, cut into 9cm pieces, plus 1 extra stalk roughly chopped

For the custard

8 egg yolks
150g caster sugar
50g cornflour
1L full-cream milk
2 tsp vanilla bean paste

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a 20cm x 30cm lamington pan and line with baking paper, leaving 2cm overhang on each side.
2. Place butter and 1/2 cup (110g) sugar in a stand mixer with the paddle attachment and beat to combine. Beat in the flour to combine then press mixture evenly into the base of the prepared pan. Prick all over with a fork, then bake for 20 minutes or until golden. Reduce oven to 160°C.
3. Meanwhile, for the custard, whisk egg yolks, sugar and cornflour in a heatproof bowl until smooth. Place milk and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to just below the boil, then remove from heat. Pour hot milk mixture over the egg mixture, whisking slowly until combined. Return mixture to saucepan and place over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly with a whisk, for 5-6 minutes until a thick custard. Remove from heat and cool for 5 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve, then pour over the base. Cool for 10 minutes.
4. Arrange rhubarb pieces on top in 2 even rows. Bake for 30 minutes or until custard has set with a gentle wobble in the centre. While slice is baking, combine extra chopped rhubarb, remaining 1/4 cup (55g) caster sugar and 1/4 (60ml) cup water in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a simmer and simmer rapidly for 4-5 minutes to break down rhubarb. Strain through a fine sieve. Remove slice from oven and brush over rhubarb syrup. Cool slice completely then chill before serving. D.S.



Committee Updates

After the sad passing of Edwina Simpson and to ensure the continued momentum of our community projects, the committee has formally co-opted Jane Madgwick. Jane brings a wealth of expertise in environmental issues and management, which will be invaluable as we move forward with our upcoming planting projects and village improvement initiatives.

Infrastructure & Improvements

We are pleased to announce that permission has been granted for a new memorial bench at the New Road junction, dedicated to the memory of Mick Briscoe. In keeping with our goal to make Catfield more accessible for all residents, the installation will include a hardstanding area. This ensures that those using walking frames, wheelchairs, or pushchairs can access the seating area safely and comfortably.

Upcoming Events & Fundraising

Our spring calendar is filling up quickly, with all profits continuing to support our parish projects and donations.

Monthly Bingo Nights: These will run from **February through April.**

Yard Sale - 19th April: Preparations are in full swing. ***Seller registrations start on March 1st at The Crown Inn.*** The registration fee remains at **£5.**

Plant Sale 17th May: Planning is underway to provide a variety of locally sourced plants for residents and visitors.

You can Contact Catfield Action team at catfieldactionteam@gmail.com

Tip:- Paper bookmarks work well until they slip out of the book. Instead wrap a rubber band around the part of the book that you have read. You won't lose your place even if you drop the book.

Articles for the Catfield News

If you have an article for the magazine we would love to receive it, but **please remember to include your name as we do not print articles if we do not know who the author is.** We don't have to print your name, but we need to know who you are.

Do you have a picture that you think would look good on the cover, or maybe an old picture of an area that has been redeveloped. Articles and pictures can either be e-mailed to one of the team or dropped into the Catfield News box in the Catfield Stores.

Deadline for receipt of articles for March magazine is 10th March

Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat



As the months tick by, our volunteers continue with the all important station maintenance. Keeping our kit in top condition and ready for service at all times is particularly challenging during the colder months, but the team's commitment never wavers. Every check, repair, and clean down ensures we remain fully prepared for whatever the sea may throw our way.

The crew have also successfully completed a refresher in Emergency First Aid, with Emergency Oxygen Therapy now an additional accreditation we're proud to hold. Training like this strengthens our capability and gives our volunteers even greater confidence when responding to incidents.

We've been making good use of the rougher sea conditions too. These sessions provide an excellent opportunity to test our well drilled skills, and for some of our newer volunteers, it marked their first experience operating in such challenging waters.

As we look ahead to the spring months, stay safe and we hope to see you soon.

Rita Galbraith
Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat
Fundraising Team
Registered Charity No. 267211

Saturday March 21st - The Museum of the Broads is open for 2026!

Yes - it's time to make important marks in your diary for March. Who isn't delighted that Friday March 20th is the first day of spring? Here in Broadland the migrating birds will be seen returning, the blossom will start to appear on marsh marigolds and the first green leaves will emerge on the willow trees. Winter is closing down.

And - on Saturday March 21st The Museum of the Broads is opening up!

What better way to welcome spring than with your *first* visit (because we want to see you come back again and again) to The Museum of the Broads?

First off - if you really want to get involved call in on March 21st for our -

Volunteers Open Day

This is a brilliant opportunity to meet the team and find out more about our volunteer roles. If you're looking for a new challenge, a way to use your talents or a chance to learn some new skills we're here to talk. This could be your new thing for 2026. (And there's tea and biscuits!)

Volunteer or visitor you've got to try -

The Spring Trail

Saturday 21st March – Sunday 12th April 2026 10am – 4pm

This fun thing to do is free with your museum admission.

It's a family-friendly trail allowing you to explore the museum and discover 12 hidden messages. Have a go at mirror writing. Try morse code. Discover how the birds, the trees and the bees talk to each other. *And* if you decipher the message told in nautical flags you can claim a prize!

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and every 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9

	3			1	2	6		
	2		9				3	1
8				3				
9							6	
4		6		8		3		5
	5							2
				9				6
5	9				4		7	
		8	7	2			1	

Last Months Solution

2	3	1	6	8	9	4	5	7
4	6	7	3	2	5	8	9	1
5	8	9	7	1	4	3	2	6
7	9	8	1	5	2	6	4	3
1	4	6	9	7	3	2	8	5
3	2	5	8	4	6	7	1	9
6	1	3	4	9	8	5	7	2
8	7	2	5	3	1	9	6	4
9	5	4	2	6	7	1	3	8

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

Church of England All Saints' Church, Catfield	Services – See page 14 for details.	Rev'd Gary Noyes - 01692 678842 e-mail granoyes@gmail.com Judith Gardiner - Licensed Lay Minister and Church Warden judithgardiner5@aol.com or 01692 615807 Ros Bingham. - Licenced Lay Minister. 01692 583104 taneish.bingham@btinternet.com Dr Keith Bacon - Church Warden 01692 581314
Baptist Baptist Chapel, Stalham	See www.stalhambaptist.org.uk for latest updates	Pastor – Rev. Ron Skivington – 01692 582091
Roman Catholic Saint Helens, Hoveton Sacred Heart, N. Walsham	See www.sacredheartnorthwalsham.com for latest updates	Father Peter Raj - 01692 403258 E-mail parishpriestfrpeter@gmail.com
Methodist Ludham	See www.eangliamethodist.org.uk or facebook pages for latest updates	Rev. Lay Pastor Shaun Cushion – 01493 740237 Alan Croft - Steward - 01692 582104
Saint Fursey's Orthodox Christian Centre, Sutton	See website – www.saintfursey.uk	Rev. Stephen Weston – 01692 580552

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Saturday	Food Bar	12pm – 2pm 12pm through to 11pm	6pm – 8.30pm
Sunday	Food Bar	12pm through to 7pm 12pm through to 10.30pm	

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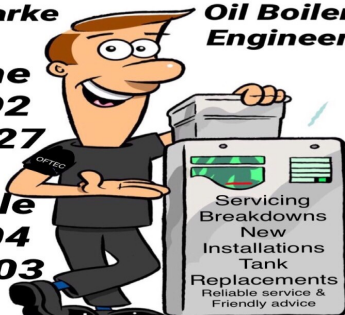
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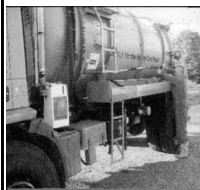
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Items for inclusion need to be received no later than **10th** of each month. Items can be e-mailed to the team, *contacts detailed on page 2*, or left in the Catfield News box in the Village Shop. Articles should be no more than 400 words and have the contributor's name attached, but the name does not have to appear in the magazine.

The Catfield News aims to be a magazine of local news and events and although we cannot always guarantee to include all items received, we will always give priority to Catfield news and events. If you have something you would like published in the magazine, please contact one of the team. For Business advertisements or small Classified Ads., please contact one of the Catfield News Team for details.

Catfield News items are published in good faith with every effort made to ensure accuracy of content as given to us. No liability can be accepted for inconvenience arising from error or omission. *The views expressed in Catfield News are not necessarily the views of the Team.*

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