

Until End February 2024: The Rev. Martin Percival
01728 598455. e-mail: moreteevicar@outlook.com

THE BRIDGE

February / March 2024

Church and Village magazine for Sweffling

Village website: www.sweffling.onesuffolk.net



Spring is coming to Sweffling

GOODBYE AND THANK YOU

The Rev. Martin Percival will be retiring at the end of February 2024. He has served as Priest in charge for the six churches in our Benefice since 2017/8 and we cannot express enough our thanks to him for his ministry and pastoral care during this time. Under his guidance our churches have continued to flourish and we will greatly miss his thought-provoking sermons and wise advice, tempered, as always, by his sense of humour. Who will keep us updated with the Cricket, Rugby and Golf results now? He has brought our churches closer together in fellowship and we look forward to this fellowship continuing after he retires. Our thanks also go to Linda, who has supported Martin unceasingly throughout his ministry. Both have become very good friends to many in the Benefice and for this we are very thankful. In Sweffling we have even more to be thankful for, since Martin was appointed Priest with special responsibility for Sweffling and Rendham after the Rev Cyril Stevens retired in 1994 and he looked after the two parishes for seven joyous years at that time.

We wish him and Linda a very happy retirement and our prayers and blessing go with them as they start the next phase of their lives.

Martin's last service will be a special Benefice service of Holy Communion at Dennington on February 25th, 11,00 a.m. The service will be followed by refreshments and will be an opportunity to say goodbye to Martin and Linda. Everyone is invited.

From the Reverend Martin Percival:

There is a saying in which the life of the Christian community is perfectly defined - The Church gathers for worship and scatters for mission. That picture is worth remembering. Week by week Christians meet together to worship God and then go their various ways both to tell others the good news of the kingdom and to serve them in whatever way God

calls. Thus, in George Herbert's poetic phrase, we offer God praise 'Seven whole days not one in seven'. I hope, such a sketch of how to be Christian is not new to you and already second nature to all who are reading this magazine. Many folk have passed on this vision of the Church's life faithfully in every generation.

At the heart of discipleship, often going without being noticed, there has to be a regular pulse and rhythmic beat. The gathering and scattering of Christian people is like breathing in and breathing out and is like the work the lungs do (which also we take too much for granted) which sustains life.

Nor can worship and mission ever be separated. They stand and fall together. Worship without mission is not just lame and watered down, it is not the genuine article. Nor can mission without worship ever be effective. Too often we mislead ourselves and think mission is an optional extra for the minority, but it is not. It is not a dimension artificially added to a Christian life from time to time when occasion demands. No, it is an indispensable part of the inner structure of the life of every disciple every day.

What is true, though, is that unless both worship and mission are strong and equal partners in the enterprise of Christian witness then our discipleship will be too weak to share in the Easter victory. Which points us to the heart of the matter, especially during Lent, which is the cost of discipleship. Being a follower of Jesus is a way of living and loving - God and others - but always with a cost to self. To be a Christian is morally challenging but also demanding in total commitment. So, in the weeks ahead, we hear Jesus saying again, 'take up your cross and follow'.

Just as the continuity between worship and mission must never be broken or separated nor must the continuity between Jesus' resurrection and his death. Ultimately Good Friday and Easter are not two separate events in Jesus' life but together the single unifying centre which gives meaning and power to everything he did and continues to do. That is the truth for our own lives and the truth we long to share with any who will listen and hear. *Martin*

APPOINTMENT OF NEW PRIEST

Preliminary discussions have started with the Rural Dean, with a view to appointing a new priest for the Benefice. During the period of inter-regnum services continue as before, with services taken by the Archdeacon, Bishop Mike, retired priests or lay elders.

Enquiries about visiting the sick, home communion, baptisms, weddings and funerals should be addressed in the first instance to the churchwardens, (John Tesh 663518 or Geoffrey Abbott 663402)

LENT in the Upper Alde Benefice

ASH WEDNESDAY. February 15th. St. Mary's Sweffling 7.00 p.m.

Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

LENT SOUP LUNCH in Sweffling Hut in aid of the hospital in the Gambia.

Saturday March 23rd. 12 noon – 2.00 p.m.

EASTER Memorial Lily Festival, Sweffling At Easter we will again be having lilies given in memory of family and friends. Please see back page for of the Bridge for details Each lily will cost £4.00. Please give the names of those to be remembered together with the money for the lilies to Diana Smith (663578) or Sheila Tesh (663518).

Reports of Christmas in Sweffling

The Christmas Brunch and Market was held on November 25th. As usual the bacon (and egg) rolls and coffee were delicious and thoroughly enjoyed by the large number of people who attended. The stalls were well-supported as was the raffle. It was a most enjoyable morning. Very many thanks to all who helped in any way or provided raffle prizes. A total of £778 was raised for Church Funds - well done everyone!!

The Christmas Brass Concert was held in church on December 8th. The band had a new conductor, who had selected a programme entirely based on Christmas music. It was an excellent evening, with many popular favorites tunes as well as Christmas carols for everyone to sing, and in which the audience joined enthusiastically. The mince pies and tea/coffee in the interval were delicious and the raffle proved a great success. A real start to Christmas celebrations in the Village. Next year's concert will be on **FRIDAY DECEMBER 6th. BOOK THE DATE.** A treat not to be missed.

Christmas Services. For the **Carols by Candlelight service** on December 17th the church was beautifully decorated and the Christmas tree looked amazing. A large congregation listened to the Christmas story unfold in the nine lessons and enjoyed singing familiar carols which were led by the Benifice Choir. The Choir also sang three solo carols, which were much appreciated. Thanks to everyone who participated and to the Rev. Percival for leading the service.

Christmas Eve Midnight Holy Communion by extension was taken by Professor John Tesh. Although we were not a large congregation it was a quiet and thoughtful service with which to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas before the excitement and activity of Christmas Day.

Lyz Frankin writes regarding Ipswich Outreach:

I would like to thank the organisers of the Christmas Brunch in the Hut on 25th November and everyone who supported my stall. A total of £66 was raised on the day. During the year £99 was raised from sales of my surplus garden produce, copies of Andy's poetry book "The Ipswich Bus", and donations from Sweffling residents. The total amount sent to the charity in 2023 was therefore £165.

Ipswich Outreach is a charity which helps the homeless and those in need in Ipswich by running a nightly Soup Kitchen. The charity now has a purpose-built single decker bus, complete with serving facilities, seating, storage and two treatment rooms, which is used by the Soup Kitchen to distribute food and clothing, and by other agencies who offer support and advice to those in need.

Sweffling Supper club – Kirsten Stanley writes:

Ruth and I would like to thank everyone, those who cooked and those who donated to the evening, who made our recent supper club such a success.

On a very wet Thursday 4th January we met in the White Horse and enjoyed some fantastic Dutch dishes. Thanks to Mark and Marie our hosts. So far this season we have been able to support both the St Elizabeth Hospice and the Chapman Centre.

Our next supper club will be on Thursday 1st February when our theme will be winter warmers. Again any funds raised will go to support a local charity. Please contact Kirstin Stanley at kirstin.stanley1@gmail.com if you wish to participate.

Parish Council (PC) News: Report of December 2023 meeting

Village Open meeting: National Grid Sealink and two other similar projects.

The National Grid, a private, not state-owned company, held a consultation afternoon in Saxmundham on December 3rd to outline plans to bring AC electricity onshore from North Sea windfarms, and transmit this, via underground cables, to three giant converter stations proposed to be built just to the east of Saxmundham, where it will be converted to DC electricity. More underground cables will then send the DC current to a huge substation at Friston and, from there, return cables to the sea and take electricity to converter stations on the Kent coast to provide AC electricity to London and the Southeast. A number of councillors attended this consultation and were very concerned that these plans would destroy Suffolk's coastal environment and were horrified at the scale of the industrialisation at Saxmundham and Friston. The PC held an open village meeting on Tuesday 12th December in the Hut and invited members of Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) to address the meeting. Around 20 residents attended and unanimously agreed to oppose the plans to abuse the Suffolk countryside in this way. Although the meeting was not opposed to green energy *per se*, the PC has submitted a response to National Grid suggesting that converters be built in the North Sea, as was happening in other European countries, and that brownfield sites be used rather than destroying Suffolk's sensitive environmental sites and the tourist economy. Individuals were also encouraged to submit their own feedback.

Flooding in the village: The October flooding in the village affected 10% of Sweffling homes and the PC have been liaising with our District Councillors over the causes and possible actions to prevent future flooding. A village working party has been set up, led by Councillor Steve Ashurst, initially to walk round the village and record problems/blockages in the Gull, field ditches, culverts, road drains etc. He will attend a January public meeting in Framlingham with other residents and county and District councillors to see if Sweffling and other PCs along the rivers Alde and Ore can obtain funding for a village survey of watercourses, with a view to reducing the flood risk.

Vacancy for Sweffling Parish Clerk: The PC wish to appoint a Parish Clerk, duties average 3.5 hrs per week, payable on the NALC clerk's pay scales for a suitably qualified person. Applicants should contact the temporary clerk via the PC e-mail address for more details: swefflingclerk@outlook.com or swefflingclerk@gmail.com

Date of next meeting: Tuesday February 13th 2024, 7.30 p.m. Sweffling Hut.
All residents are invited to attend.

Nature Notes February - March 2024

Last summer, a few of the fields in Sweffling had 'wildlife planting' around the edges, mixed plants designed to provide flowers for pollinating insects, and seeds for gamebirds and other farmland birds. More about these later in the year. There are also a couple of whole fields similarly planted, which now are paying off by attracting large numbers of birds. Seedheads such as Sunflower and Millet are being visited by flocks of finches, mainly Goldfinches and Chaffinches, such as are seldom seen in the fields these days. There may be others to look for. A similar field in Great Glemham attracted some 500 Bramblings, a scarce finch which sometimes visits in the winter (a bit like a Chaffinch, but with frosty white underparts, rusty sides, and a conspicuous white rump. We have

occasionally seen them in the garden in past winters). The birds tend to make forays into the field, and keep dashing into the cover of the nearby trees and hedges. Try the field on the right, at the top of Holden's Lane.

In December, I was shown a pair of birds which I take to be new to Sweffling. These were Egyptian Geese. They were on the floodplain meadow beside the Benhall Low Street bridge, and I have heard that they were still around in January. This is a medium sized goose, with pale buff plumage and a reddish-brown back. Its most striking features are a dark patch around the eye, and large white wing-patches which show in flight. Despite the name, this goose is found all over Africa, the ones found here were probably introduced from South Africa in the 18th century as an ornamental species. They have since taken up residence in Norfolk, and are now widespread in East Anglia as a wild breeding bird, and spreading further afield.



The fields of sugar beet next door to us were harvested remarkably quickly in mid-January. I gather that they may be used for a wildlife planting later in the year. For a few days the fields were used by foraging gulls, Black-headed Gulls and Common Gulls. Common Gulls are not especially common in the South, and are mainly here in the winter. They look like small Herring Gulls, grey with prominent black and white wing tips. Greenish-yellow beaks and feet distinguish them, and the dark eyes give



them a much kinder expression than the mean-looking Herring Gull! Have a look at the pictures if you don't believe me.

Birds come into spring song surprisingly early, especially in a spell of warmer weather. In the garden Great Tits are the most obvious, with their loud 'teacher teacher' note. Despite its simplicity, this really is a song, produced only by the male, who is thereby defending his territory and attracting a mate. (Calls are also simple sounds, denoting alarm or hunger or other such signals). Other well-known garden songs include Robin and Blackbird, while that of the



Dunnock, which has been singing for a month and is just as common, is less familiar. Quieter than most, it is an attractive, rapid warbling song. It is worth getting to know it. My personal favourite spring song is the Mistle Thrush, typically singing early in the year. This has loud, clear notes, like that of a Blackbird, but shorter and simpler, and without the repeated phrases of the Song Thrush. Even in poor weather, it rings out as a sure sign of spring.

Geoffrey Abbott

What's going on at the Hut?

For a calendar of events check out the village website!

New ventures:

- **Sunday lunch** followed by a talk - once a month 12.45 pm (please book).
- **Soup lunch** followed by jigsaws and board or card games - second Tuesday each month
- **'Men@Work'**. monthly club - last Wednesdays 7 - 9 pm
Inaugural meeting 31st January 'Sherry- tasting' led by Mike Smithson!
- Computer Workshop - **'Showing your Computer who's boss'**.
Mondays 2 - 4pm Adrian Kinsey will run a 4-week Windows Computer Workshop
Started Monday 22nd January 2pm - 4pm. The first session (free of charge) explored
The issues that participants would like to be addressed. Subsequent sessions will be
held on 29th Jan, 5th Feb and 12th Feb (donation by participants to cover costs).
Bring your windows laptop if you have one.
- **'Understanding your Garden'** - by Steve Flowerday. 3 illustrated talks.
Wednesdays 6th, 13th and 20th March 7.30pm- 9.30pm

Please note the next Hut Sunday Lunch will be on Sunday 18th February

(not 11th as previously advertised), at 12.45pm. Adults £10, children's menu £4, with a special story written for children about the 'Scary, scary ghost of Sweffling.'

Saturday Craft Workshops - either will make a lovely Mother's Day Gift!

- **'Embroidered Brooches'** with Liz Eaton. Saturday 2nd March 10 - 1pm cost £15
- **Silver Jewellery Making Workshop** with Sue Studd. (5 places left)
Saturday 9th March 11 - 4pm. Cost £70 and make up to 4 pieces of jewellery.

Please book swefflinghut@gmail.com or via village website sweffling.suffolkonline.net

Mike Smithson is now Chairman of the Hut Committee and Jenny Tyson is Treasurer.

The Hut hire rate is £10 an hour - bookings taken for parties, meetings, workshops, film shows, educational events etc. (Max. no. of seats 60)

To contact the committee please email swefflinghut@gmail.com

Tennis Club AGM:

The Sweffling Tennis Club AGM will be held at 7.00 pm on Monday 4th March in the Sweffling White Horse. Minutes and agenda will be circulated to members nearer the time.

The club welcomes new members, and with the Easter holidays starting in late March, we are offering a 14-month membership for the price of 12. This is for anyone who would like to join prior to our annual renewal date of the 1st June. For further details please contact the club secretary, Sue Rusack at SueRyderR@rusack.myzen.co.uk.

Alde Community Council Spring Flower Show

Sweffling Hut Saturday 6th April. 2024.

Exhibits to the Hut 9 - 10am, Judging at 10am.

Entry forms in Village Halls and on village websites. Show opens at 2.00pm

Entry £1 (includes tea/coffee) Under 12s free. Presentation of cups at 3.00pm followed by Raffle. This is a fun event – you do not have to be an expert gardener to enter. Classes for adults and children. Cut blooms and flower arranging Why not take part?

Enquiries, ring Lynda Newson on 663325.

Trees for the Jubilee Field:

Steve Ashurst has been sourcing trees from the Woodland Trust to replace those on the Jubilee Field that did not survive last year's drought conditions. He should be receiving 100 trees in mid-January. These should not be bare rooted, so immediate planting is not critical, but please contact Steve if you can help.

Macmillan Coffee Morning, September 30th 2023

This report is a little later than planned, but the coffee morning held in Rendham Village Hall last September, in aid of Macmillan Nurses was a great success. It was extremely well attended and the cakes were delicious. Together with generous donations the total raised was £771.15. Many thanks to everyone who helped in any way, towards a terrific result. *Lynda Newson*

CHURCH SERVICES – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

Date	Venue	Time	Service
February 4th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
February 11th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
February 15th	Sweffling	7.00 p.m.	ASH WEDNESDAY Holy Communion
February 18th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
February 25th	DENNINGTON	11.00 a.m.	SPECIAL BENEFICE SERVICE TO SAY FAREWELL TO MARTIN AND LINDA PERCIVAL. SERVICE FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS. ALL INVITED
March 3rd	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
March 10th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
March 17th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
March 24th	Rendham	9.30 a.m.	PALM SUNDAY Holy Communion
March 28th	Bruisyard	7.00 p.m.	MAUNDY THURSDAY Holy Communion
March 29th	Cransford	10.00 a.m.	GOOD FRIDAY Walk of Witness from St Peter's Church to Christian Fellowship Chapel. Service in chapel, followed by Hot Cross Buns.
March 31st	Sweffling	10.00 a.m.	EASTER SUNDAY BENEFICE HOLY COMMUNION AND LILY FESTIVAL
April 7 th	Sweffling	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Epiphany Carol Service

On Sunday January 21st, an Epiphany Carol Service was held in St Mary's Church. The service was led by John Tesh and took the form of bible readings hymns and /or carols and prayers. The readings followed the revelation of Christ, the light of the world, from the beginning of Genesis to the presentation of the Christ Child in the temple, when the Holy family returned to Nazareth from their flight into Egypt. It was a very enjoyable service and thanks go to the readers for bringing the story so vividly to life.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WARM UP!

First Thursday Supper at Sweffling White Horse
February 1st Winter Warmers
March 7th theme to be announced



Tennis Club AGM Monday March 4th 7.00 p.m.
Sweffling White Horse
New members welcome



EASTER LILIES: At Easter we will again be having lilies, each one given in memory of family and friends. Their names will be written on a memorial scroll, which will be read out at the service on Easter Day. If you would like to order a lily or lilies, please contact Diana Smith (663578) or Sheila Tesh (663518) by March 25th, or as soon as possible afterwards, as the lilies have to be ordered in good time in order to be open by Easter Day. Each lily will cost £4.00. Please give the names of those to be remembered together with the money for the lilies. The church will be open on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.) to enjoy the lilies and remember our loved ones.



LENT SOUP LUNCH: SATURDAY MARCH 23rd
SWEFFLING HUT 12.00 noon – 2.00p.m.

The Annual Lent Soup Lunch, in aid of the hospital we support in the Gambia, As much home-made soup and bread as you can eat.

Adults £6.00, children £3.00

If you can help by making soup or giving a raffle prize, please contact Sheila Tesh (663618) or Jill Abbott (663402). All proceeds to the Gambia.



ACC SPRING FLOWER SHOW
SATURDAY APRIL 6th SWEFFLING HUT

Entry forms in Village Halls and on Village websites. Show opens at 2pm. Presentation of cups at 3pm followed by Raffle. Enquiries ring Lynda on 663325. New exhibitors welcome,

DON'T FORGET THE HUT PROGRAMME

Please e-mail any news items, events or short literary items for consideration for inclusion in the April/May edition to john.tesh@talk21.com before March 12th. The editors welcome contributions for The Bridge but reserve the right to edit. Accuracy of the content is the responsibility of the submitter. We are limited to 8 pages and so may not be able to publish everything we receive. Dated items of village interest will be given priority. Please include your name and contact details in case we need to get in touch. **The Bridge is sponsored by St. Mary's Church and is delivered free to all houses in the Village.**