

THE BRIDGE February/March 2025

Church and Village magazine for Sweffling

Village website: sweffling@onesuffolk.net,

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SIGNS OF SPRING

Although the snowdrops in Sweffling seem late this year, there are a few beginning to show their heads, together with aconites and winter cyclamens. During February and March we can look forward to the better weather and daffodils, violets and primroses. They all make us feel happy and we can appreciate the beauty of nature and God's bounty.

REVD. CLAIRE WRITES:

I am writing this on a Sunday evening in January and I have been thinking during the weekend of new beginnings. I have tried to think of a different theme in case you thought I was still writing about a new year in February/March when you read this, but a new year is not on my mind. Yesterday we had a wedding in Bruisyard and it was a marvellous occasion, made even more perfect by the picturesque haw frost and blue skies. A wedding celebrates the beginning of a marriage and it looks forward to the happy couple spending the rest of their lives together. Inevitably for guests it is a reminder of other weddings they have been to, particularly by those who have been blessed with a happy marriage for they share the joy of the couple in anticipation of all that is to come for them.

Also this weekend I have been preparing to attend the Ministry Development Programme run by the diocese. All clergy at some point will attend the course, I and 15 others have been invited to be part of this year's cohort and the course will continue at various points in the year. This will be the beginning of a new adventure and I know that when a group of clergy get together like this new bonds and friendships are forged and through it we are reformed and refashioned. I am sure there will be lots of joy involved but these formational experiences can often be quite painful.

In all new beginnings we are tempted to look ahead and try to predict what might happen, somehow it seems a new beginning is easier if we know what to expect. In life it seems we often try to look ahead rather than staying in the moment. Winter is one of those times when we want to look ahead to spring but in doing so are we failing to stop and notice some of the delights of winter. Snowdrops are one such delight, yet how often when the first snowdrops appear people will refer to spring being on its way rather than just appreciating the winter flower in its own season.

In recent years instead of wishing it was spring I have been intentional about developing a love of winter. I confess I still don't like icy roads or bitter winds but I do love the bare

trees. I like standing under a tree and seeing a blue sky, I like seeing the bare twigs and thinking about different routes we take in life and I love looking across the fields at bare hedges and trees in the distance making up a rich tapestry. The other day as darkness was falling I was delighted to see from the Rectory window an owl sitting on the bare branch of a tree. The apple tree in the garden is bare and yet the red apples on the grass look very pretty from the window and are being enjoyed by flocks of birds.

It is good sometimes to dwell in the present. "Be still and know that I am Lord", says the psalmist. Concentrating on the present moment helps us to trust in the God who is with us in all our beginnings and endings.

Revd Claire

RETIREMENT OF BISHOP MARTIN:

Bishop Martin, the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, will retire at the end of February. His Farewell Service will be held in the Cathedral in Bury St. Edmunds at 3.30 p.m. on February 2nd. Unfortunately, because of the seating capacity of the cathedral, it is invitation by ticket only, but it will be live-streamed, [facebook.com/stedscathedral](https://www.facebook.com/stedscathedral), and you can find an order of service on the Cathedral website.

It is unlikely that a new bishop will be appointed before Autumn 2025. In the meantime, responsibility for the diocese will be assumed by two retired bishops, Graeme Knowles and Tim Stevens.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES IN SWEFFLING

The Christmas Brunch and Market held on November 20th was very well attended. Those who attended enjoyed delicious bacon rolls, with the option of one of Amanda's fresh eggs, and tea or coffee. There were stalls selling cakes, home-made marmalade and pickles, beautiful accessories, mystery parcels, Christmas gifts and the usual raffle. Lyz Franklin had a stall selling items to support the Ipswich Outreach Charity (see below). It was a time to catch up and chat with friends and enjoy good food and drink. The morning was very successful, with a total of £536.70 being raised for Church funds. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and to those who supported.

Lyz Franklin writes: Ipswich Outreach

I would like to thank the organisers of the Christmas Brunch and Market and everyone who supported my stall. A total of £82 was raised on the day. During the year £118 was raised from sales of my surplus garden produce, copies of Andy's poetry book "The Ipswich Bus" and donations from Sweffling residents. In particular, I would like to thank Diana who generously donated a large amount of the proceeds from her flower stall too. The total amount sent to the charity in 2024 was, therefore, £200.

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

Christmas Brass Concert. Unfortunately, due to the forecast of severe windy conditions on the evening of December 6th, the decision was taken to cancel the concert. Several of the Band members travel long distances and it was considered sensible not to expose the band and audience to the risk of fallen trees etc. in the dark. It is hoped that a Spring 2025 Concert might be organised in its place. Keep a lookout for news!

Christmas Wreath Making Workshop: Jill Abbott organised a wreath-making workshop in Sweffling Hut on December 7th. It was a very successful and productive time, and the fruits of the workshop have graced several house doors in Sweffling over the Christmas period. Jill provided all the materials and the expertise and, as a result of the day, has made a donation of £67 to Church funds, for which the PCC is very grateful.

Carols by Candlelight. The Church was full for the Christmas Carol Service on Sunday December 15th at 5.00 p.m., led by Rev. Claire. The church was beautifully decorated with window arrangements of cyclamens, foliage, glitter and candles, and the Christmas tree shone out in the candlelight. The congregation enjoyed singing familiar carols and listening again to the unfolding of the events leading up to and including the time of Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem. The Benefice Choir led the singing and also sang three solo items. After the service mincepies and tea/coffee were served. The collection of £165.36 has been donated to the Children's Society.

Christmas Eve Midnight Holy Communion. A small but dedicated congregation joined with the Rev. Claire in celebrating the birth of Christ on Christmas Eve. It was a quiet, reflective service, which prepared those present for the hectic events to follow on Christmas Day.

LENT in the Upper Alde Benefice

ASH WEDNESDAY. March 5th: Holy Communion Rendham 11.00 a.m., Dennington 7.00 p.m.

LENT CHARITY SOUP LUNCH will be held in Sweffling Hut on March 15th, 12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m. As much home-made soup and bread as you can eat. Vegetarian and Gluten free options. 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).

LENT STUDY COURSE: Rev. Claire will be holding a Lent Study course at the Rectory, Badingham, on Tuesday afternoons at 2.30 p.m., commencing March 18th, and on Wednesday evenings, starting on March 19th, time to be confirmed. Please contact Rev. Claire for further details.

As Easter is late this year (Easter Sunday, April 20th), information regarding services in Holy Week will be published in the next edition of The Bridge.

EASTER MEMORIAL LILY FESTIVAL, Sweffling, Weekend of April 20th.

At Easter we will again be having lilies given in memory of family and friends. Please see back page 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).

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS.

The draft minutes of the meeting of the PC held on January 14th have been posted in the Village notice board at the end of Holden's Lane. Please consult these for detailed information of the proceedings.

A Vote of thanks: The Parish Council wanted to thank Cllr Ashurst and the volunteers who had done so much over the past months on remedial works around the village to repair damage done by the floods and to prepare the village for any such future event.

Potential vacancies on the Parish Council: Two of our Parish Councillors have indicated that they are likely to relocate from Sweffling during this year. If you would like to consider doing something for our village by serving on the council, please contact the Parish Clerk, Peter Grogan, on sweffling.clerk@outlook.com or the chairman, John Tesh, on john.tesh@talk21.com. for more information.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday March 11th, 7.30 p.m. Open to all village residents.

ACC NEWS from Lynda Newson:

ACC Bus to Norwich was a big success. 46 people enjoyed the day and most came home well-laden. Many thanks go to John McKee who gave a donation of £50.00 towards the bus on behalf of Bruisyard Community account, which helped to keep the price down.

ACC Spring Flower Show

We are planning to hold the Spring Flower Show in Sweffling Hut on Saturday 5th April. Exhibits to the hut between 9.00 and 10.00am. Judging at 10.00am. 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.

Enquiries, ring Lynda on 663325.

BRIDGE NATURE NOTES Feb – March 2025

This winter has been a noisy one for Tawny Owls: a lot of people have been hearing the familiar hooting call, mostly used by the male to advertise his territory in the woods and trees. Male and female both use the other call, a short, loud 'tee-wit' or 'kee-wick'. In the last three months there has also been a lot of calling from another owl, the Little Owl. This is the least nocturnal of our local owls, and can sometimes be seen in broad daylight. It tends to 'sit out', on tree branches and especially fence posts, sometimes appearing to be sunning itself. At these times it is easily distinguished, a small upright owl, greyish brown with pale flecks, a flat head, and legs held together like a narrow stalk. The call, too, can be heard in daytime and early evening. It is a short, very loud 'yip,' very distinctive and very useful for telling that Little Owls are around. The one that has been calling around our house lately has been showing itself on the roof on some mornings. It seems to have been sheltering underneath the solar panel, and peeping out as if to catch the sun. Because of the sloping tiles my pictures unfortunately do not show the typical 'lollipop' stance. Little Owls are not true natives, having been introduced, from Europe, in the nineteenth century. They seem to fit in well and are not usually regarded as a problem.



Our garden bird feeders have become busier with the arrival of colder weather. There are some differences from previous years (which the RSPB annual bird count is designed to investigate – I hope you took part!) For instance, in past winters at this time, we have had numbers of Siskins or Redpolls, or both, feeding busily on the nyger seed so loved by the Goldfinches. Last year there was even a Brambling, a winter visiting finch from Scandinavia. This one was a female, lacking the blackish head of the male, but still

with the pale orange breast which helps to distinguish it from a female Chaffinch. Feeding on nyger was unusual -Bramblings prefer larger seed, and in the countryside can be found eating the mast below Beech trees. In our area they have been seen feeding in planted conservation strips. Check the field at the top of Holden's Lane. Here there have been flocks of Chaffinch and Goldfinch, and more recently up to a dozen Yellowhammers.

An annoying mouse in our kitchen had to be caught (in a live trap I should add) and transported elsewhere. It had to go some distance as I know from experience that Wood Mice are great homers. In a previous home I released one, humanely marked, one third of a mile away, and two nights later it was back. Last week's mouse was not an ordinary Wood Mouse. It was a much rarer species called a Yellow-necked Mouse. These are only found in certain parts of southern England. They are larger than our other mice, a rich reddish-brown colour and with a very long tail. The distinctive feature, which gives them their name, is that on their very white underside they have a band of yellow, running across the chest between the front legs. My posed photo tries to show this. You should also know that they have a severe bite, especially for anyone who tries to examine their yellow stripe! They live in woodland and large gardens, and are prone to coming into houses in the winter. Some think that they were the original Suffolk church mice.

Geoffrey Abbott



DEFIBRILLATOR IN SWEFFLING:

You may have noticed the yellow defibrillator cabinet at the entrance to Sweffling Hut car park. This has been provided thanks to a grant from the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and installed using the fund raising organised by Laura Mann. The cabinet is not locked, at the request of BHF, so that everyone can access it if needed. Training is available online (BHF) and via any smart phone by scanning the QR code on the posters in the village notice board or the church porch. Leaflets giving more information and the QR code are available from Amanda's egg shed. For those who prefer to have group training, events will be organised in Sweffling Hut and we hope everyone who can do so will take advantage of the training. Details will be on the village website and circulated around the village. The defibrillator is registered so that it can also be used by the emergency services, first responders etc. The cabinet is lit at night and the funds raised also covered the upgraded dusk to dawn light above the steps and door to Sweffling Hut. Please take up the training and make our community a more resilient one for the future.

Amanda Daniel
Editorial note: Many thanks to Amanda and Laura for arranging this.

LAURA SENT IN THE FOLLOWING NEWS:

Thanks to councillor Owen Grey for funding the hall hire so the Rural Coffee Caravan can run for another year.

I'm hoping to start planning the Children's activities for the year. If any village organisations and businesses would like to invite us to have a go or set up an activity- please contact me so I can arrange this. I hope to have a small amount of funding to make this very low cost / free for participating families.

I spent a few hours adding all the events I could find on to the website. If I have missed anything, can organisations and businesses, please send me a message with where I can

find information so I can put it on the website. <https://sweffling-pc.gov.uk/village-calendar/>.

My usual message about joining the whatsapp grapevine, the majority voted to continue my Sunday "what's on this week" message (which I use the website calendar to get the information). If you would to join the group, please message Laura on 07999 403928. This group is also for updates in between Bridge issues and emergency communications.

Mental Health First Aider Training:

Could Your Organisation Benefit from a Mental Health First Aider?

We're inviting organisations in our village to nominate a committee member to train as a certified Mental Health First Aider. Having a trained Mental Health First Aider ensures someone can support colleagues, volunteers, or community members when needed. The training covers practical skills to recognise signs of mental health challenges in others, how to help them in crisis, and ways to promote positive mental health and reduce stigma in your organisation. If your organisation would like to participate or learn more, please look at the website: <https://mhfaengland.org/individuals/adult/mental-health-first-aid/> or contact Laura on 07999 403928

Emergency First Aid Training: If you are interested in participating in a one-day HSE approved Emergency First Aid at Work Course, please contact Laura. The course is specially designed for villages with no first-responders, as is Sweffling. It was held last year in Sweffling and Rendham and was led by Paul Davies, a retired GP. The feedback from the course was very positive. There is a reasonable fee for the course, depending upon how many people participate.

WHAT'S GOING ON AT SWEFFLING HUT THIS SPRING?

The Spring Programme of Events at the Hut will be delivered to your door very soon, so look out for details of new courses, talks and workshops:

What's new? Tuesday 11th February Taster iPad Session followed by a course of 4 workshops led by experienced tutor Wendy Gilbert. £15 per session.

Book up 'Fish & Ships' a Maritime Quiz - with fish supper on Saturday 22nd March 7pm - Mike Smithson is organising this. (See below)

See the programme for all the details of events and how to book.

A welcome return of **Geoffrey's talks on Sweffling Wildlife** in March and April.

Check out Clare Hassler's exercise classes and a new Craft workshop by Liz Eaton.

There's something for everyone at the Hut this Spring.

FISH AND SHIPS at Sweffling Hut 7pm Saturday 22nd March 2025



Sweffling Hut is putting on light hearted quiz with a maritime flavour, following a **fish and chip supper**. Find out if you know your bow from your stern or your sea knots from your nautical miles. Landlubbers need not fear, the quiz will be fun and losers will not be keelhauled. Teams of a maximum of 6 please.

How will it work?

Fish and chips, or other chip shop favourites, will be collected from Saxmundham. Payment for pre-ordered food will need to be made in advance. Orders will be collected by volunteers on your behalf. A £2.00 cover charge per order will be added to the market price of your meal to go to Hut funds. Tea will be included in the price but guests are free to bring something stronger to drink. There will be a raffle for Hut funds.

Details on final pricing and how to pay to given by the organisers in good time prior to the event. Queries to Mike Smithson mikesmithson.ms@gmail.com or 07753 825938

MEDEQUIP; Help your local NHS and social Care Services help others by any medical equipment that you no longer require. Medequip will collect it from you free of charge. Call 01473, 351 805 or email suffolk@medequip-uk.com.

For more information. Please see the posters on the village notice board, Townland meadow or in Sweffling Hut.

SWEFFLING TOWNLAND TRUST:

A reminder that the Townland Trust, which was established in the 1600's to help those in the village in need with free coal and bread, is still in existence today and has limited funds to assist any village resident in need of financial assistance in the form of a one-off grant. All requests are treated in confidence and are known only to the Trustees. If you, or someone you know, has a special need, please contact Rev. Claire (07469 718695), Sandy Rowe (01728 663753), Andy Franklin (663600), Jill Sedge (07930 808007) or Sheila Tesh (663518).

CHURCH SERVICES – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

| Date | Venue | Time | Service |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| February 2nd | Sweffling | 9.30 a.m. | Candlemas - Holy Communion |
| February 9th | Rendham | 9.30 a.m. | Morning Prayer |
| February 15th | Sweffling | 9.30 a.m. | Morning Prayer |
| February 22nd | Rendham | 9.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| March 2nd | Sweffling | 9.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| March 5th | Rendham Dennington | 11.00 a.m. 7.00 p.m. | Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Holy Communion |
| March 9th | Rendham | 9.30 a.m. | Morning Prayer |
| March 15th | Sweffling | 9.30 a.m. | Morning Prayer |
| March 22th | Rendham | 9.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| April 6th | Sweffling | 9.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |

There is a midweek service of Holy communion on each Wednesday at 11.00 a.m. which rotates around the benefice as follows:

1st Wednesday – Rendham, 2nd Wednesday Sweffling,
3rd Wednesday Cransford, 4th Wednesday Bruisyard.

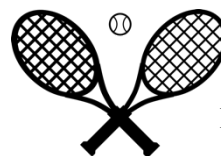
Please note, there will not be a service in Sweffling on March 12th as the Rev. Claire will be away.

FOR DETAILS OF HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE, SEE NEXT EDITION OF THE BRIDGE.

UPCOMING EVENTS



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, April 20th, 9.30 a.m.. If you would like to order a lily or lilies, please contact Diana Smith (663578) or Sheila Tesh (663518) by April 7th, 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 CHARITY SOUP LUNCH:
SATURDAY MARCH 15th, SWEFFLING HUT
12.00 noon – 2.00p.m.

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 Charity to be announced.



ACC SPRING FLOWER SHOW
SATURDAY APRIL 5th 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.**