



The Mallard

Issue 411

June 2026

Flight Lt Colin Bell, DFC, visit to Massingham Airfield



On Friday 8th May, the 81st Anniversary of VE Day, a piece of living WW2 history visited Great Massingham Airfield.

Flight Lt Colin Bell, DFC, now aged **105**, pictured left, was a Mosquito Pilot during the Second World War. He served at RAF Downham Market as a member of the elite Pathfinder 608 Squadron and has recently published a book about his wartime exploits, entitled 'Bloody Dangerous'!

As a tribute to his service, it was arranged by members of the Royal Air Squadron to fly him in a TigerMoth biplane, pictured right, over his old airfield.

This special occasion was marked by a contingent of serving officers from RAF Marham and the Last Post was sounded by the Massingham village bugler in memory of Colin's colleagues who 'did not grow old...' A very poignant tribute.



A BBC team was also present capturing the event and it was broadcast on the BBC Breakfast news program. It can be found on YouTube under 'Colin Bell Takes to the Skies' if anyone missed it.

Lex Brun

Editor: Georgie Harries

Address: The Old Rectory, Little Massingham
Phone: 07946 649 955

Please send any articles to:

themallardeditor@gmail.com

Closing date for next issue:

17th June

This Parish magazine is published every month for residents of Great and Little Massingham with support from the Great Massingham Parish Council, The Parochial Church Council and Great Massingham Village Hall Trustees

Film night

Thursday 18th June, 7pm

Hamnet

Village Hall



Set in 1580s England, this historical drama follows William Shakespeare and his fiercely independent wife

Agnes as they struggle to survive the heartbreaking loss of their 11-year-old son, Hamnet. 7 Oscar nominations.

Denys Winner Memorial Bench

Many of us were deeply saddened by Denys's passing in May 2024. Den was a familiar face, often seen zipping around the village on his mobility scooter; stopping to chat, tracking aircraft on his phone or eating his favourite ice cream on the Green.

Den worked and supported many organisations within the community and beyond and we would like to honour his name by purchasing a bench and plaque.

This bench will serve as a lasting tribute to his kindness and contribution to our neighbourhood, providing a spot for reflection, chatting with friends, or simply enjoying the view. Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. However, if you wish donate in person, please hand to Massingham Historical Society and receive a receipt.



Thank you for your support.

Jeanne Robinson and MHS

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/denys-winner>

Great Massingham Parish Council Meetings



Annual Parish Council Meeting – 18th May 2026

Present: Kevin Hobart (Chair), Cllr Alexis Brun, Cllr Peter James, Cllr Oliver Locke, Cllr Kim Frazer, Cllr Robin Arbenz, Cllr Pete Harries

Apologies: Cllr Sue Nash, BCKLWN Cllr Alistair Beales and Cllr Maria West

The Annual Parish Council Meeting was held on Monday 18 May 2026 at the Village Hall. Cllr Kevin Hobart was re-elected as Chair, and Cllr Robin Arbenz was elected as Vice Chair. During public questions, residents raised concerns about parking on and around the village greens, including Abbey Road and Station Road. Councillors noted the previous parish consultation, where most respondents opposed parking on the greens, and agreed that further clarification would be provided.

The Council considered planning application 26/00687/F for a proposed rear extension at 3B Kennels Farm, 19 Castleacre Road, and agreed to make no observations.

Updates were received on several ongoing matters. Work continues on fishing arrangements at the ponds, including rules, permits and the appointment of a fishing warden. The new village noticeboard is still being chased with the supplier, and horse chestnut trees on Houghton Estate land are due to be surveyed. The land behind the surgery was discussed, including valuation options and possible future consultation with the community.

Cllr Harries reported that progress continues on the Massingham Together play area. Funding and invoicing are being finalised, and the opening is planned for 1 August, alongside a village fete. A request for “dogs on leads” signage will be raised with the Village Hall.

The Clerk reported that year-end work, internal audit requirements and AGAR paperwork had been completed. The new website is now live, including a page for *The Mallard*, and a new Unity Trust Bank account is being opened for the magazine. The new Scribe accounting system has also been set up.

Reports were also received on the Village Hall, school, biodiversity, ponds, village greens, the Neighbourhood Development Plan, allotments and The Mallard. A new editor is in place, and the May edition has been produced.

Councillors approved a triple fronted waste and recycling bin for the play area and Village Hall at £948.10, subject to confirmation that the Village Hall will empty it. A quote of £3,536.60 for low fencing at Abbeyfields was also approved. Repairs to a green post and the dog bin on Mad Dog Lane will be arranged.

The Christmas lights switch-on will take place on 11 December from 4pm, with use of the Dabbling Duck Barn agreed. A road closure will be requested.

The Council approved April bank reconciliations, May payments to date, AGAR sections 1 and 2, the CIL return, and a £200 donation to Norfolk Citizens Advice.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 15 June at 7.30pm in Great Massingham Village Hall.

This article summarises draft minutes of the May PC meetings. For full details please see Village noticeboard or visit the new website <https://greatmassingham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/>

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News from the Hall

The past few weeks have seen a variety of things take place at the Village Hall. From Coffee Mornings to Pamper Evenings, all very sociable

events, a chance for friends to meet for a good old natter. A Disco and a Karaoke filled the Bar with happy revellers, 'She who must be obeyed' closed the night singing The Time of my Life and has apologised profusely for any hearing damage and anxiety caused. World Cup Fever is already brewing, keep an eye out for opening times throughout the competition. Whilst on the subject of football, our boys are holding their football presentation night on 27th June. England are playing that night, so if you're not a fan of watching the match you can always have a boogie in the Hall instead. Check out the back page to see what is happening this coming month. Or visit greatmassinghamvillagehall.co.uk. We have availability for all sorts of events.

Debs Lambert



Great Massingham Playground

The Play Area Working Group is pleased to share an early concept for the improvements to the playground behind the Village Hall. The aim is to create a welcoming, inclusive and natural play-space for children of different ages and abilities, with places for families, carers and residents to sit, meet and enjoy the setting. The concept includes new climbing and balancing equipment, swings, double zip wires, accessible play features, surfaced paths, picnic seating, meadow areas and an outdoor classroom.

Subject to final approvals and funding arrangements, the main playground will be closed during the build period in **June and July**, with a target opening date of **1st August**. The **'Under-5s' play area is expected to remain open** during this time. As part of the work being done; the existing **outdoor gym, mound slide and metal zipwire** will be removed to make way for the new layout and equipment.



CGI illustration of the planned play space



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Harpley Village Hall

Coffee Morning

Saturday 13th June,
10am – Noon

Regular Events

Mondays:

Chair Fit, 10.30-11.15am

Women's Fitness & Boxing, 5.30–6.30pm

Harpley Choir, 7.30–8.30pm

Tuesdays: Pilates, 6.15–7.15pm

Thursdays: Table Tennis Club, 5.00–7pm

Fridays: Fitness Pilates, 9.00–10am

Email : Harpleylive@gmail.com

www.harpleyvillagehall.uk

Lunch Munch Bunch

Tuesday 16th June
12.30 - 2.30pm

MAIN

Roast Gammon

dauphinoise potatoes, cabbage and carrots

DESSERT

Fruit tart and ice cream

£9.00

GAYTON COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 13th June

10am – 12noon

St Nicholas Church, Gayton

Fresh coffee, tea, homemade cakes and cookies.

Catch up with friends, meet new faces and support
our local community, everyone is welcome!

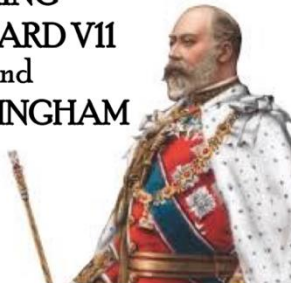
Contact Christine 01553 636913 or email

revdsuemartin@gmail.com

Bring a friend and spread the word!

MASSINGHAM HISTORICAL SOC.

KING
EDWARD VII
and
SANDRINGHAM



By Ben Coulson

19th June 7.30pm
Village Hall

PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAY FARMING

Members free, Guests £3, Bar open

Can you smell
the beeswax?!



Join Caroline and friends polishing
pews at **Little Massingham Church.**



Wed 17th – Fri 19th June
10.00am – 3.30pm



No need to polish if you just want to chat!

Caroline (née Meredith) has long family
ties to the village — her great grandparents
built The Manor.



Craft and Chat

8th and 22nd June

2–4pm

GM Village
Hall Bar





World War Two History Day

At Veterans Central, RAF West Raynham SHQ

★ **21 June** | 10.00am to 3.00pm

Join us for a fascinating day of World War Two history at RAF West Raynham SHQ. Enjoy military vehicles, re-enactors, historical displays, talks, WWII wargames, a Lancaster VR experience, guided tours, open Hunter and Canberra cockpits, book bargains, café and gardens.

FREE to attend

VETERANS CENTRAL, RAF WEST RAYNHAM SHQ, NR21 7PL

★ More information: events@veteranscentral.co.uk ★




Cadets Enjoy Successful Services Day at West Raynham SHQ

On Saturday 9th May, Veterans Central hosted more than 70 young people from local cadet groups, including Air Cadets, Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and Scouts.

In glorious Norfolk sunshine, teams took part in a range of exercises designed to develop communication, teamwork and leadership skills. Activities included intelligence gathering, Test Flight, Tower Build and helium stick challenges.

After completing the exercises, participants enjoyed displays including Hunter and Canberra aircraft, Bloodhound missiles, military vehicles, tabletop wargames and radio communications with enthusiasts around the world.

The day was a great success, giving cadets the chance to work together, learn new skills and meet military veterans. Such a success in fact that Veterans Central has already agreed a date for the 2027 Cadet Services Day. Cadet organisations interested in taking part can contact us on ops@veteranscentral.co.uk.



St Andrew's Church Little Massingham, awarded National Lottery Grant

St Andrew's Church, Little Massingham, has received a major grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help secure the future of this much-loved historic building.

The funding will support urgent roof repairs, replacing the temporary covering with a permanent terne-coated stainless steel roof. This is vital work, as the Grade I listed church has been on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register since the theft of its lead roof in 2017.

The project will also explore ways to make the church more welcoming and sustainable, including possible improvements such as accessible toilet and kitchenette facilities. New interpretation, nature information boards and heritage walking routes will help visitors discover more about the church, the village and the surrounding Norfolk landscape.

The grant is wonderful news, huge thanks to all those who have worked so hard to make it possible including National Lottery players, local volunteers, the Friends of St Andrew's (FOSALM), the Diocese of Norwich and the wider community.

Rev'd Joshua Whitnall



Wildlife Artists on Massingham Heath



Darren Woodhead SWLA shares his work with Martha beside Lynn Lane

Well known presenter and journalist Martha Kearney visited the heath in April to record an episode of BBC Radio 4's Open Country about the SWLA project that has documented the heath over a full year. Martha was full of admiration for the project and showed a great deal of interest in the heath, its wildlife and the artists who have been working here. The programme was broadcast early last month but you can hear it by searching for 'Open Country and Wildlife Artists on Massingham Heath' on BBC Sounds.

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Great Massingham CE Primary School

Dear All,

The summer term is in full swing with all the dates and events that start to fill up the calendar in an exciting, yet daunting, way. The year six children have just finished their SATs tests, the phonics screening check for Yr1 is on the horizon, and every child and adult is working hard on completing the remainder of this year's curriculum content. It's arguably the busiest term and certainly the most tense. It was a privilege to be with the Yr6 children as they grappled with their test papers, smiling nervously as they caught my eye now and then, and letting out excited relief at the end. One pupil couldn't help but share their excitement that one question had really stumped them, but they left it and went back to it and suddenly realised they knew the answer after all. "It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be" was a regular comment.

It made me think about the role school plays in preparing children for the next stage of life. It's a tricky balance to strike between supporting, ensuring not too much pressure, and challenging, enabling children to gain personal development by facing things they would rather not do or that make them anxious. In today's busy world this balance gets a little harder.

As we head into the second half of the summer term there is much to look forward to. The two schools have a prayer space morning coming up in June with Reverend Josh, followed by a picnic lunch with families on the school field. There is a federation day on the 2nd of June focused on sport, health and wellbeing, a visit from the Bishop of King's Lynn and both schools have a KS2 production planned for the junior children. This is just a small selection of the events and trips coming up this term. By the time we get to tearful goodbyes at the leavers' service we will all be thoroughly exhausted... and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Hilary Myhill, Headteacher

Monthly Draw

March Winners

1st Liz Jeffery
2nd Rosie Chandler
3rd Ray Molyneux

April Winners

1st Leanne Elton
2nd Joules Lodge
3rd Darly Pyskin

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Reverend's Reflection

Dear Friends,

In May many in our villages and communities will have followed the results of the local elections with a mixture of hope, disappointment, relief, uncertainty, or renewed determination. The rhetoric around elections seems hard wired to bring out division, but every time I put a cross in a box, I am reminded that our villages are shaped not only by national politics, but by the faithful service of local people who care deeply about unity in the places we call home.



In our villages, we see that service every day. It is found in parish, district and new county councillors. It is found in volunteers and school governors, in charity trustees, PCC Members, carers, posties, shopkeepers and neighbours who simply look out for one another. Strong communities are not built overnight, nor are they sustained by politics alone. They are built through relationships, kindness, sacrifice, and a shared hope for the future.

Recently, faith leaders across Norfolk issued a shared invitation to help “build hope-filled communities”, reminding us that the true strength of our county is found not simply in institutions or politics, but in ordinary people caring for one another every day. For hope is contagious. A hopeful village becomes a kinder village. A hopeful community becomes a stronger community. And as Christians, we believe that hope ultimately begins not in politics or institutions, but in people who choose, day by day, to love their neighbour well.

Perhaps, this month, we might take a moment to give thanks for all those who have served our communities faithfully, often quietly and without recognition. Maybe you would join me in praying that they would lead with wisdom, humility, integrity, and compassion; that they would listen well, work together, and help nurture communities marked not by division or despair, but by hope.

God bless you all.

Revd Joshua Whitnall, Rector

HARPLEY COMMUNITY
CHOIR

FUNDRAISING CONCERT

Sunday June 14th, 5.30PM

St Lawrence Church, Harpley

FUNDRAISING AS PART OF THE
CHURCH 'OPEN GARDENS EVENT'

Selection of music from classical to
modern

NO TICKET SALES - DONATIONS ONLY, AT THE EVENT

Harpley
Open
Gardens

Sunday 14th June 2026
10am - 4.30pm

- Open gardens, plant stands, croquet lawn
- Village History Trail (organised by Harpley History Group)
- Raffle and refreshments all day in church
- Children's competition
- Treasure hunt
- Summer Concert performed by Harpley Community Choir

5.30pm in St Lawrence Church, all welcome

Church Services

Date	Time	Service	Location
3rd June	9.00am	Holy Communion	Harpley
7th June 1 st Sunday after Trinity	8.30 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Family Service Holy Communion Holy Communion	Congham Harpley Grimston Gt. Massingham
14th June 2 nd Sunday after Trinity	8.30am 10.30am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Songs of Praise	Roydon Gayton Gt Massingham
17th June	9am	Holy Communion	Grimston
21st June 3 rd Sunday after Trinity	8.30 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Family Holy Communion Morning Praise	East Walton Harpley Gt. Massingham Grimston
28th June 4 th Sunday after Trinity	8.30am 10.30 am 10.30 am 3pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Celtic Service	Ashwicken Gayton Lt. Massingham Gayton Thorpe
Please check the website for any alterations to services. www.ggmbenefice.uk			

Fakenham Choral Society

Summer concert

Vivaldi's Gloria & Mozart's Coronation Mass

Fakenham Choral Society will perform Vivaldi's Gloria and Mozart's Coronation Mass at its summer concert.
A wonderful evening of well-loved choral music, and Mark Jones's final concert as Music Director.

Date: Saturday 20 June 2026

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: Fakenham Parish Church

Booking: www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org/forthcoming-1

All welcome

Tea with a Pony sessions

At The Magpie Centre

have returned for the 2026 season,



running until **early October**.

Especially popular with community, dementia support, school, children's and wellbeing groups, social clubs and care homes, these sessions offer a relaxed, friendly chance for people of all ages to meet the ponies, learn about the RDA and the Centre, and enjoy tea and cake!

For more information contact the centre:

Tel: [01553 810202](tel:01553810202)

Email: magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk

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Useful Contacts

Allotment Association	Daisy Robinson	07979 723 288
Biodiversity Project	Tim Baldwin	520 813
Borough Council	Alistair Beales	cllr.alistair.beales@west-norfolk.gov.uk
Bell Ringing	Dale Gagen	520 024
Bowls Club	Malcolm Hipkin	520 393
Cartshed Tearoom	Jemma Whitmore	520 272 (Option 3)
Church Contacts	Rev'd Josh Whitnall Stephen Hudson	07949 989 977 01485 750 075 rectorggmbenefice@gmail.com
Community Car Scheme	Office	520 823
Coronation Club	Jill Whitmore	520 609
County Councillor	Stuart Graham Dark	07860 256 083
Craft & Chat	Sue Nash	520 476 & 07802 670 711
Dabbling Duck Pub	Mark Dobby	520 827
The Film Night	Arthur Allen	07810 042 816
Fishing Warden	Vacant	PC Clerk 01328 823391
French Conversation Group	Arthur Allen	07810 042 816
Trefoil Guild	Rita Gostling	520 730
Massingham Historical Society	Jeanne Robinson	520 455
GM Stores & Post Office	Mark Eldridge	520 272 (Options 1 & 2)
Neighbourhood Plan	Jess Cunningham	gmndplan@yahoo.com
Pre-School	Pip Grange	07807 185 746
School	Hilary Myhill	520 362
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Dates at a Glance

Date	Event	Time	Place
7 th June	Household Furniture and Effects Auction	12 – 4:00pm	Village Hall
8 th June	Craft and Chat	2:00 - 4:00pm	Village Hall
11 th June	Trefoil Guild Meeting	7:00 pm	Village Hall
14 th June	Harpley Open Gardens	10:00 – 4.30pm	Harpley
	Harpley Community Choir Concert	5:30pm	Harpley Church
15 th June	GM Parish Council Meeting	7 for 7.30pm	Village Hall
16 th June	Lunch, Munch, Bunch	12:30 pm	Village Hall
	Quiz Night	7:30pm	Dabbling Duck
17 th June	Pew Polishing at St Andrews Church	10:00 – 3:30pm	LM Church
	Creative Socials Stitching Workshop	1:00 - 3:00pm	Village Hall
18 th June	Pew Polishing at St Andrews Church	10:00 – 3:30pm	LM Church
	Film Club – Hamnet	7:00pm	Village Hall
19 th June	Pew Polishing at St Andrews Church	10:00 – 3:30pm	LM Church
	Massingham Historical Society	7:00pm	Village Hall
20 th June	Fakenham Choral Soc. Summer Concert	7:30pm	Fakenham
21 st June	WWII History Day	10:00 – 3:00pm	RAF W. Raynham
22 nd June	Craft and Chat	2:00 - 4:00pm	Village Hall
27 th June	Football Club Presentation Night	8:00 pm	Village Hall Bar
	and Disco		Village Hall
30 th June	Coronation Club	2:00pm	Village Hall

Quiz Night

RAISING FUNDS FOR
VETERANS' CENTRAL WEST RAYNHAM

DATE: Tuesday 16th June 2026

VENUE: Back Restaurant of The Dabbling Duck

TIME: 19:30

QUIZ DETAILS

- Quizmaster: Malcolm Tibble
- Entry: £30 a team (max 6 people) or £5 each to join a scratch team on the night
- To enter email: robertcharlestaylor@live.com
- We often get sold out for this one

PRIZES & FUNDRAISING

- Winning Prize: 6 vouchers for Sunday Roast main course in the Pub
- Raffle on the night with a selection of prizes donated by friends of the beneficiary
- 50/50 draw with the takings split equally between the owner of the drawn ticket and the beneficiary

FOOD OPTION

- There will be a £17.50 main course of Lasagne with Garlic Bread and mixed leaves, from which a donation of £4 will be made by the pub to the beneficiary.
- Vegetarian alternative: Vegetable Curry

Please advise if you wish to partake by close of business on Sunday 14th June 2026

Great quiz, great cause, great night!