

The Mallard

Issue 39

December 2024/January 2025

GREAT MASSINGHAM & HARPLEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOLS FEDERATION

It was a very busy start to the autumn term for our two schools. Firstly, Great Massingham received a two-day Ofsted inspection on the 18th and 19th September and then, on the 9th October, Harpley had a SIAMS inspection. SIAMS no longer grades schools following an inspection but the written report was very complimentary. Ofsted, however, is also no longer giving an overall grade, but is still grading the four main areas they inspect. We are pleased to say that Great Massingham was graded GOOD for all areas. The report was very positive indeed. For example, comments include *'pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are enthusiastic and work hard.'* .. *'the school is a close community and older pupils look out for and support the younger ones'*.. *'The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and makes sure that learning is engaging.'* .. and *'Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities are included well in the life of the school'*. Both reports can be read on the Federation website - gmhfd.norfolk.sch.uk. Other activities, at Great Massingham, during this busy term, include the Harvest Festival at the Church and a visit to Norwich Museum as part of KS2 studies.

Sad to say goodbye..... We are all sad to be saying goodbye to Mrs Kirsten Stibbon, our Head Teacher, at the end of this term. Kirsten's strong leadership has enabled our two schools to continue to grow and achieve under her guidance. It hasn't been the easiest of times to be a Head Teacher, especially during the COVID pandemic, but her



professionalism, willingness and positive approach helped us through. Kirsten joined the staff in 2018 as Assistant Head and then, following the retirement of Ann Beardall, was appointed to the Head Teacher role. We cannot thank her enough for all she has done for our two schools and we wish her all the best for the future. She can be proud that she leaves both schools in a strong position going forward. A huge thank you from us all.

New Head Teacher for January 2024..... The Governing Body is pleased to announce that they have appointed Mrs Hilary Myhill to the position of Head Teacher from 1st January 2024. Mrs Myhill is an experienced teacher and school leader and is very much looking forward to joining the Great Massingham and Harpley team.



Kirsten Stibbon



Mallard News

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

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Deadline for the next issue

**17th January
2025**

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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Our Christmas 2024 Edition covers both December 2024 and January 2025. You will find many interesting events on pages 8 and 9 to help celebrate Christmas. Please try and support as much as you are able.

SHOE BOXES - A BIG THANK YOU

Wow, thanks to everyone who donated items, money, shoe boxes and knitted items. You have been truly amazing and because of you, 80 SHOE BOXES have been sent to children and families, mostly in Eastern Europe, who otherwise would not receive anything this Christmas. Thank you all so much. Please start saving and collecting for next year! *Jenny Borley*

SUPPORT FOR POPPIES

Great Massingham Craft and Chat group would like to thank everyone who bought the handmade Remembrance Poppies in the shop. A total of £43.80 was raised! *Sue Nash*

THANKS TO OUR CHURCH VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

On behalf of the church I would like to offer sincere thanks to the following people and groups for their excellent support we have received.

The cleaning rota (see page 16) has been a tremendous success and the results have been sparkling. We are blessed with quite a large population of bats which have probably been resident for several hundred years. During their wake months and as the nursery start flying means large amounts of bat poo. This is easing now as they hibernate. We are very grateful for all your efforts.

The churchyard is kept very well maintained by our voluntary ground crew Pip, Robert and Keith. Many thanks. Your work is commented on very favourably by visitors and mourners. Thank you. The church clock is wound every week by Dale and it is much appreciated by all. Our food bank is very ably run by Anna and June. Thanks to them and everyone who contributes to keep this necessity stocked. I would thank Judi who sweeps and cleans the church every week helped by other PCC members

Personally I give my thanks to everyone who assists during these difficult times during our vacancy. I have to mention Rev Michael Paddison, Rev Joy Fernando and Rev Adrian Bell who have taken some of our services and the PCC for their help. All the best wishes and blessings for our Christmastide.

Stephen Hudson, Churchwarden



NEWS FROM THE HALL

Rumble in the Jumble on Sunday, 10th November, raised a wonderful £350 - all of it destined towards refurbishing the village hall. Knowing the bargains to be had 3 items of clothing for £1, up to £4 for nearly new dresses and coats, visitors came from other villages to pick up a bargain - or 10! Another one is planned for next Spring - even bigger and better.

This will join the regular programme of Craft and Chat meetings, Community Lunches, Film Nights, Talks from the Historical Society, Bingo Nights as well as the Creative Socials (held on a Wednesday afternoon once a month). There are plans to introduce new events to the village hall's calendar for 2025, including 'Music in the Bar' evenings and, for those who can't wait, a 'Dee and Mindy Drag Bingo Night'

has already been booked. Another idea is to update events from the previous years that have proved entertaining and successful. But, before all this, don't forget to look out for a Christmas Bingo Evening and a Christmas Quiz. The 'Two A's', with their own special brand of entertainment, have already been booked for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve celebrations are currently being organised...

By the time you read this, there will have been another sell-out 'Hog Roast Dinner', which will not only raise funds to help with the upkeep of the hall, but provide a great evening for the 100 or so who are attending. In case you missed the hog roast, there is always the chance to buy a mouth-watering, freshly cooked pizza from the Pizza Wagon on a Friday night as well as making sure you join the queue for the 'Build your own Burger' van - available from 4.00 pm every Saturday.

That's all for now - any thoughts for events for next year at the hall would be very welcomed. You know where we are!

So, until next year, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful 2025.

MEET THE NEW VILLAGE HALL CHAIRPERSON HELEN MORRELL

Hello – my name is Helen Morrell and I thought I should introduce myself as the new chairperson of the Village Hall. I'm taking over from Phil Ward whose shoes it will be difficult to fill after his ten years at the helm.

My husband, David Morrell, is the vice chairman. We have lived in Drunken Drove for some 2 years and have enjoyed every minute. Previously we lived in Gayton for 35 years. We are now working with a dynamic group of Village Hall Trustees, Events and Financial teams plus the Social Club staff. We all understand the importance of keeping the Social Club and Village Hall buoyant as it is such a valuable resource for all the village people. We are still getting to know characters in the village. If we accidentally tread on any toes please let us know. It takes time to respect and understand village history and 'politics' but we are willing to learn. The Village Hall needs people to get involved and to support events at the hall and bar. I have plenty of ideas as to the way forward but would dearly love to hear thoughts from others, as would the trustees.

There is so much on offer in Great Massingham but the Hall and Social club should be the hub of the community. It is owned by the community and is there for all of us. Please get involved or just make contact for a chat or throw some ideas at us.

Helen Morrell (07766972647)



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Bena Fanneran and family would like to thank the local community, and people from further afield for their support and kindness during Richard's illness. We would particularly like to thank everyone who attended Richard's funeral service on 23rd October 2024, for the donations made and particularly the love that was felt on the day.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

During October and November 2024, the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Committee engaged with members of the community to discuss some of the emerging matters from the work so far. The theme covered was Housing with reference to tenure, affordability and specific use.

The discussion covered such topics as, the definition of 'affordable' homes and the conditions required to be able to deliver them, the desirability of extending the village Development Boundary to facilitate future housing and if there should be provision for planning dwellings for older people.

These meetings are part of a series of conversations and no decisions were made but, will be taken on board by the NDP Steering Group. Thank you to those who participated in the discussion.

Future planned consultation meetings are as follows:-

Tuesday 3rd December 19.00 - 20.30hrs. Theme – Employment Land and Loss of Residential Property – Meet at the Village Hall.

Saturday 7th December 10.00 – 13.00hrs. - Site visits to consider the details of our identified Views. Meet at the Village Well.

Tuesday 17th December 19.00 – 20.30hrs. Theme – Greenspaces and Views. Meet at the Village Hall.

For the most up-to-date reporting on progress with the Neighbourhood Development Plan - please go to our website www.greatmassinghamndp.co.uk

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RESTORING SCOTSMAN'S PIT: A COMMUNITY CONSERVATION EFFORT



On Friday mornings, you may have noticed the group of men plus one lady who are busy paddling in Scotsman's Pit.

The rationale behind this is that fishermen, backed up by a bathymetric survey of the pit, have noticed that it is rapidly silting up. Now, both Post Office and School pits have been successfully dredged, but why not this one?

Well, the main reason is that due to the fact much of both the marginal and bank vegetation has been denuded over the last few years, there is nothing to stabilise the

banks and these have been eroding fast. This has been particularly noticeable on the Station Road side, where partly due to the prevailing south-westerly winds, wave action has undermined the edge by a considerable amount. Last year, it was possible to measure an undercut of nearly three feet in places and over the winter months, a noticeable quantity of turfs could be seen drifting away in the water. Apart from the obvious silting up of the water, this also presented a hazard to anyone standing near to the edge if it suddenly gave way.

Historically the pit edges were bare, but this was when there was mud right up to the road edge and the horse and cart were the main form of transport. Later photographs show a wealth of edge plants, but sadly, many of these have been mown away. So, the volunteer group named "Friends of Scotsman's Pit, Great Massingham" was formed. Our aim is to help to stabilise the banks where possible by both reinforcing the edges as well as reintroducing some of the missing plants. By achieving this, we aim not only to help preserve this magnificent body of water for anglers, but to also create a colourful village centre for all to enjoy. Initially, efforts were confined to the use of stones, many kindly donated from local gardens and lengths of woven willow. These were combined with mud dug from the pit. This gave the opportunity for planting marginal plants, transferred from other areas of the pit. As well as this, a one metre "no mow" margin was negotiated in order to allow the edges to stabilise. Whilst this was partially successful, it was soon decided that a more permanent solution was needed. So, professional advice was sought, and with the kind financial assistance of the Parish Council, lengths of coir rolls were purchased. These were staked close in to the banks where erosion was at its worst. Again, this gave a firm edge which could be back filled and planted. The main plants chosen were Sweet and Yellow Flags, Juncus Grass and Water Mint, all of which were readily available from the two main pits. *Cont'd Page 10*



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Great Massingham Christmas Event

Join us for some
Christmas Carols
Friday December 6th @ 6pm

On the green in front
of the Dabbling Duck

Cash collection in
aid of the food bank

Mince Pies & Mulled Wine

Harpley Community Choir

CRAFT & CHAT DATES

From 2pm to 4pm
Village Hall Bar
Monday 9th and 23rd December
Everyone welcome.



Please
join us

Community Lunch Massingham Village Hall Bar

Tuesday 10th December
Arrive 12.30pm, eat at 1pm
Traditional Christmas Lunch

Come & meet friends for a chat.
The Bar will be open.

To book lunch please contact Deborah
Lambert on 07493 406 501 or, email on
mrstdl1965@gmail.com by Tuesday 3rd.

HARPLEY VILLAGE HALL
CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING
Saturday 14th December
10.00 - 12.00 Midday



**CHRISTMAS
PRIZE BINGO**

Friday 6th December
Doors open at 6.45pm, Eyes Down
7.30pm
Great Massingham Village Hall



St Mary's Church Gt. Massingham Live Nativity

Carol Service

Sunday 15th December

3pm

Come & enjoy the magic of
the Nativity.

A warm welcome to all.



Afternoon Tea Sunday 8th December 3pm - 5.30pm

£5 tickets for Historical Society members, £8 for guests, must be bought in advance from Jeanne Robinson or Sandy Francis

This event is run by Massingham Historical Society in Great Massingham Village Hall

All food and cups of tea/coffee included in price

The bar will be open to buy wine, raffle tickets will also be on sale.

Join FAKENHAM CHORAL SOCIETY
for an evening of festive favourites at its
2024 Christmas Concert at 5.30 pm on
Saturday 14th December at Fakenham
Parish Church.



Great Massingham Village Hall

Christmas Eve Music "Two A's"

7.30pm until 10pm In the Bar

Free to Members

You can be signed in for the evening for £2

Pop along and have a sing song

FAMILY DISCO

31st December, 8.00pm till late
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10th January 7.30 - 11 pm
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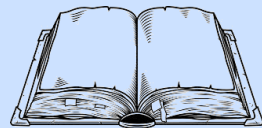
MASSINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Archive Evening

Friday 17th January

Come along & see our collection of
photos, documents, research
studies & maps.

Village Hall 7.30pm



Members Free, Guests £3.00 Bar open



THURSDAY
23rd January 2025

We will be holding an
informal quiz in the bar of
the **Village Hall at 7.00pm.**

Your quizmaster will be Malcom Tibble.

← If any children would like to take part in our live nativity on 15th December at the Carol service could they contact Anna Burpitt on 07896040971. We shall be having the lovely donkeys & sheep joining us & taking part. The nativity scene will be in the church porch as people enter the Carol Service. Shepherds, Wise Men and Angels all welcome!



RESTORING SCOTSMAN'S PIT: A COMMUNITY CONSERVATION EFFORT... CONT'D

These efforts have proved to be very successful in stopping further erosion as well as adding colour and interest to the edges. In addition, strimming and further mowing can now be carried out much closer to the edge without damaging the banks.

Now, apart from passers-by, the main users of the pit are the anglers. The group have regularly liaised with them to seek both their views and wishes. Many compliments have been received as to the improvement to both water quality and the fish. Gaps in the taller edge plants are being left to allow access for fishermen to their favourite fishing spots. The other change has been the increase in both flowers and insects seen. Dragon and Damsel flies, beautiful moths, colourful flowers are all there to be admired. An organised walk around the village was organised this summer by the Biodiversity Group, with many of the plants labelled for all to see. This was very popular, gaining a great deal of interest and praise from both villagers and visitors alike. One couple remarked that what was once a muddy pit was now a riot of colour and life.

Geese! Yes, the bane of many in the village!

Unfortunately, close mown grass plus clear water edges are their favourite habitat, so if you wish to discourage them, then do not create this in the first place! Also, on one day this year, a pair of swans were spotted on the water. Many residents had fond memories of when these were a regular sight, but as many of the reeds, in which they would nest, were removed, there is nothing to attract them back.

Now the winter season, with high, cold, water levels is upon us, the group have slowed down their work, but we will be back in the spring, busy planting and repairing. The Parish Council purchased a quantity of daffodil bulbs and the group have planted these around the greens ready for a welcome spring greeting next year.

Next year, we hope to continue our efforts to stabilise the banks and reintroduce marginal plants to not only help, but to create a habitat for fish and aquatic life to thrive in. Some parts are however beyond our capabilities and the Parish Council are looking into ways of helping here, as professional help and equipment may well be needed. Once this has been achieved, it may well be time for the pit to be dredged, but this will be a far more serious undertaking than the last two, so we will have to wait and see.

So, if you see us paddling, do stop and say hello, or perhaps even join us! You do not need to get your feet wet, as many villagers have supplied us not only with materials, but coffee, cake and ice creams in the hot weather as well. Regular thanks and praise are offered and this perhaps shows that many appreciate our efforts.

Peter James



GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Due to the later than planned Parish Council meeting held on the 25th November please see this month's full article on the Parish Council website by visiting the 'News' page. Join us for a festive Christmas event on December 6th at 6:00 pm (details on page 8). Enjoy mulled wine and mince pies provided by The Dabbling Duck, along with a delightful performance by the Harpley Community Choir.

There is no Parish Council meeting in December. Both the annual budget and the precept requirement will be discussed and approved at the January meeting, which will be held in the Village Hall on Monday 20th January, 2023 at 7.30pm.

To contact the Clerk, Sarah Harvey you can telephone 01328 823391, email gmparishclerk@gmail.com or write to Byanoak, Leicester Road, South Creak, NR21 9PW.

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Church Services

December 2024/January 2025

Date	Time	Service	Location
Sunday 1st December <i>Advent Sunday</i>	8.30 am 9.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Family Service Holy Communion	Roydon Harpley Grimston
Wed 4th December	9.00 am	Holy Communion	Harpley
Sunday 8th December <i>2nd Sunday in Advent</i>	8.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Songs of Praise Songs of Praise	Congham Gayton Lt Massingham Gt Massingham
Sunday 15th December <i>3rd Sunday in Advent</i>	9.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 3.00 pm 3.00 pm 7.00 pm	Sung Eucharist Advent Holy Communion Holy Communion Carol Service Carol Service Carol Service	Harpley Grimston Gt Massingham Gayton Gt Massingham Roydon
Monday 16th December	6.00 pm	Carol Service	Ashwicken School
Tuesday 17th December	6.00 pm	Carol Service	Grimston
Wed 18th December	9.00 am 7.00 pm	Holy Communion Carol Service	Grimston East Walton
Friday 20th December	6.00 pm	Carol Service	Congham
Saturday 21st December	6.00 pm	Carol Service	Gayton Thorpe
Sunday 22nd December	8.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion Family Service Holy Communion Carol Service	East Walton Gayton Gt Massingham Lt Massingham Harpley
Tuesday 24th December <i>Christmas Eve</i>	8.30 am 4.00 pm 4.00 pm 11.30 pm	Holy Communion Family Carols & Crib Service Christingle Service Midnight Communion	Congham Gayton Gt Massingham Grimston
Wed 25th December <i>Christmas Day</i>	10.30 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Family Worship	Ashwicken Harpley
Sunday 29th December	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Congham

For more news and alterations to services please visit our benefice website at
www.ggmbenefice.uk

Message for Parishioners from Rev'd Sue Martin



Dear Friends,

It all began in Bethlehem!

Christmas is coming, a time full of great joy and wonder. When the Christmas lights twinkle in our streets and houses, lifting our spirits. It's a time to share with friends and families, spending time together, bringing and receiving gifts.

The Christmas story is as wonderful today as ever it was. Jesus, the Son of God, born to Mary and Joseph in a stable in Bethlehem. I've been to Bethlehem twice, it's such a special place and very evocative of that time over 2000 years ago. It would have been buzzing with people coming to be registered, families getting together and travellers stopping to rest before journeying on. It is very close to Jerusalem but today there are borders and checkpoints which mark the boundaries and it's not always easy to get through. A favourite carol of mine is...

O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see these lie.

Above the deep and dreamless sleep, the silent Stars go by.

Yet in the dark streets shineth, the everlasting light

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

There are so many carols, old and new which tell the story of that special night over 2000 years ago. In each of our ten churches we have a Carol Service before Christmas.

It's a wonderful time to come to church, join in the singing and hear the Christmas story.

We have lots going on in December, from Christmas Tree Festivals to school Nativity plays and Christingles. It's all in the magazines and on our website.

The best place to read about the Christmas Story is in the Bible, try Luke, Chapter 2, when the shepherds were on the hillside and the Angel Gabriel told them to go the stable where they would find a baby born to Mary.

Let's remember those who find it hard to celebrate, loneliness and hardship make it a tough time. It doesn't all have to be about spending money

Christmas is also about being together, round the Christmas tree, not forgetting Father Christmas of course!! So, however you spend your Christmas you can always find a space for the time to welcome Jesus into the world as a baby born in a stable in Bethlehem.

God Bless and have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year! *Rev'd Sue Martin*

January/February 2025 Services For Great & Little Massingham	Time	Service	Location
Sunday 5th January	10.30 am	Family Service	Great Massingham
Sunday 12th January	10.30 am 10.30 am	Songs of Praise Songs of Praise	Little Massingham Great Massingham
Sunday 19th January	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Great Massingham
Sunday 26th January	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Little Massingham
Sunday 2nd February	10.30 am	Family Service	Great Massingham

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Useful Contacts

Organisation	Contact	Phone No/Email Address
Allotment Association	Daisy Robinson	07979 723 288
Biodiversity Project	Tim Baldwin	520 813
Borough Councillor	Alistair Beales	cllr.alistair.beales@west-norfolk.gov.uk
Bell Ringing	Dale Gagen	520 024
Bowls Club	Peter Wadham	520 796
Church Contacts	Stephen Hudson	520 450
Community Car Scheme	Office	520 823
Coronation Club	Jill Whitmore	520 609
County Councillor	Stuart Graham Dark	07450 679 355
Craft & Chat	Sue Nash	520 476 & 07802670711
Dabbling Duck Pub	Mark Dobby	520 827
Doctors	Massingham Surgery	520 521
The Film Night	Arthur Allen	07810 042816
Fishing Warden	Connor Macleod	PC Clerk 01328 823391
Trefoil Guild	Rita Gostling	520 730
Massingham Historical Society	Jeanne Robinson	520 455
Neighbourhood Plan	Jess Cunningham	gmndplan@yahoo.com
Parish Council	Sarah Harvey (Clerk)	01328 823391
Pre-School	Pip Grange	07807 185 746
Police	Non-emergency	101
School	Kirsten Stibbon	520 362
Tennis and Multi-Sports Club	Steven Gould	07557 357415
Village Hall (Hall & Bar)	Debs Lambert	520 588
Village Stores and Deli	Mark and Kerry Eldridge	520 272



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St Mary's Church
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Would like to wish
you all a Very
Merry , Peaceful &
Joyous Christmas

We also say thank you to
everyone who helps keep
our Church & Churchyard
clean & tidy. Also to all
who support us in so
many different ways.

Blessings at Christmas

HARPLEY VILLAGE HALL WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

CHAIR FIT

MONDAY 10.30 AM

CARPET BOWLS

MONDAY 2.30 - 4.30 PM

TABLE TENNIS

THURSDAY 5.00 - 7.00 PM

Email harpleylive@gmail.com

Or phone/text 07775 703 513

ST MARY'S, GREAT MASSINGHAM CLEANING ROTA

January - Historical Society

February - Tennis Club

Mar - Coronation Club/Craft & Chat

April - School/Ducklings

May - Biodiversity/FOSPGM

June - Church/Food Bank

July - Historical Society

August - Tennis Club

Sep - Coronation Club/Craft & Chat

October - School/Ducklings

November- Biodiversity/FOSPGM

December - Church/Food Bank

St Mary's Church Gt Massingham Food Bank Team

Would like to thank all those who
have so kindly & generously donated
over the past year.

&

Wish everyone we have contact with

a

Merry Christmas & Happy New year

MOBILE LIBRARY NEXT VISITS 20th December 2024 & 17th January 2025

Outside 59 Station Rd 1.35 to 1.50 pm - Sunnyside 1.55 to 2.15 pm

Outside the Church 2.20 to 2.40 pm - Weasenham Rd 2.45 to 2.55 pm

Some December 2024 & January 2025 'Dates at a Glance'

Date	Event	Time	Place
3/7/17 Dec	NDP Community Conversations	See Page 4 for details	Village Hall
6 Dec	Christmas Event (See page 8)	6.00pm	Dabbling Duck PH Green
6 Dec	Christmas Prize BINGO	6.45 for 7.30pm	Village Hall
8 Dec	Afternoon Tea	3pm to 5.30pm	Village Hall
9/23 Dec	Craft & Chat	2pm to 4pm	Village Hall Bar
10 Dec	Community Lunch	12.30 for 1.00pm	Village Hall Bar
15 Dec	Carol Service	3.00pm	St Mary's Church
24 Dec	Christmas Eve Music - 'Two Ats'	7.30pm to 10.00pm	Village Hall Bar
31 Dec	Family Disco	8.00pm till late	Village Hall
10 Jan	Karaoke Night	7.30pm to 11.00pm	Village Hall
17 Jan	Historical Society	7.30pm	Village Hall
23 Jan	Quiz Night	7.00pm	Village Hall