



COMMUNITYscene

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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TOOLS FOR
STAYING
WARM
THROUGH
THE WINTER

CAROLS
BANNED
IN THE PUB

Celebrate Christmas At Stalham Baptist Church

Candlelight Service

Sunday 18th December

All welcome for traditional Carols

Starting at 4.00pm

Christmas Carols

at the Swan Inn

High Street Stalham

Monday 19th December 7.00pm

**Celebrate Christmas Day Morning
With SBC at 10 am**

**Celebrate the New Year
Sunday 1st January
Family Service 10.45am**

Merry Christmas!

Welcome to the Christmas 2022 edition of Community Scene produced by Stalham Baptist Church.

A Really Big Thankyou

To Steve English, who has produced all our great cartoons, Barbara and Geoff Reynolds who helped with production and Roger, Niki and Katie Newman at our printers Century Printing High Street Stalham – also all the amazing volunteers who deliver the magazine for all their help.

You can contact us at editor@communityscene.org.uk or phone David Child on 07799262645.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

1. The word “Carol” actually means dance or song of praise and joy, and they used to be sung during all four seasons, but the tradition of only singing them at Christmas is the only one to survive.
2. The definition that the Met Office uses to define a white Christmas is for one snowflake to be observed falling in the 24 hours of 25th December somewhere in the UK.
3. 2021 was the last white Christmas in the UK with 6% of stations recording snow falling, but less than 1% of stations reported any snow lying on the ground.
4. Christmas crackers were invented by London sweet maker Tom Smith in 1847, He had seen the French 'bon bon' sweets (almonds wrapped in pretty paper) on a visit to Paris in 1840.
5. Holly and Ivy have been used to decorate homes since the 9th century because they symbolise everlasting life. The holly represents Christ's crown of thorns and the berries his blood.
6. The abbreviation Xmas isn't irreligious. In the early days of the Christian church, Christians used the letter X as a secret symbol to indicate their membership in the church to others. The letter X is a Greek abbreviation for Christ.
7. Ebenezer Scrooge's famous line “Bah Humbug” almost never existed. Charles Dickens' initial choice was “Bah Christmas”.
8. In Victorian times, turkey was seen as an expensive meat to eat on Christmas day, and goose was often eaten by poorer families. In A Christmas Carol, Bob Cratchit was planning to have goose before Ebenezer Scrooge surprised him with the prize turkey.
9. President Theodore Roosevelt, banned Christmas trees at the White House, but his children surprised the president by hiding a tree in a sewing room closet December 1903.
10. The Yule Log was originally an entire tree that was carefully chosen, and brought into the house with great ceremony and burned over the 12 days of Christmas.

WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



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Carols In The Pub Banned *but not in the Swan Inn Stalham*

Join us in the Swan Inn for Christmas Carols Monday December 19th 7.00pm

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647 the celebration of the traditional 12-days of Christmas were declared illegal. All shops had to remain open, including December 25th. Christmas decorations were banned, as was singing carols, and the consumption of large quantities of alcohol led to riots around the country including Norwich.

The mayor of Norwich was summoned to London to explain why he had allowed Christmas celebrations to take place, but a crowd closed the city gates to prevent him from being taken away. Armed forces were again deployed, and in the ensuing riots, the city ammunition magazine exploded, killing at least 40 people.

The ban was eventually lifted in 1660 those years would have been as described by Mr Tumnus in the Lion, Witch, and the

Wardrobe "It is winter in Narnia and has been for ever so long, always winter, but never Christmas." Carols survived as people sung them in private. But gradually went out of fashion.

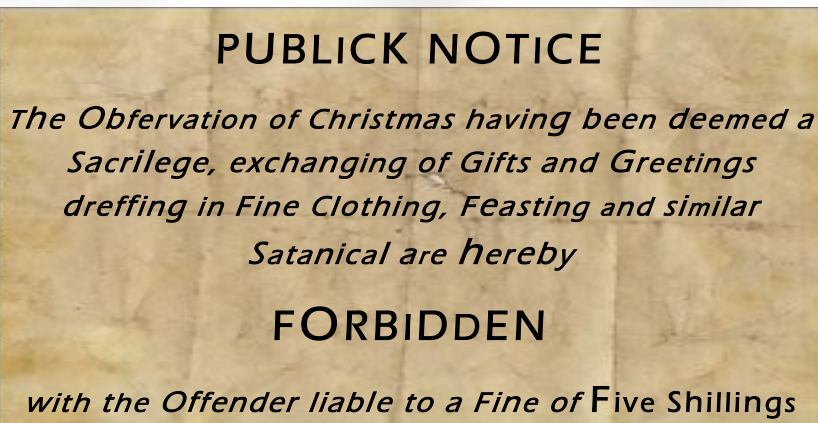
Carols remained unsung until Victorian times when William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from villages in England.

As time went on singing Carols in a public house became more and more popular, but they were never sung in Churches. The Christmas carol service was believed to have been invented in Truro in 1880 by a Bishop Edward White Benson who went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury.

The story goes that on Christmas Eve everybody in Truro would get sickeningly drunk, the bishop was so

disgusted that he decided to lure everybody out of the pubs and into the church with his new service.

The Swan Inn has held a Christmas Carol evening since 2015 with SBC. 2020 and 2021 were missed due to Covid. In September the Swan Inn was announced as the Norfolk Pub of the Year 2022.



This winter maybe cold but we can celebrate Christmas.



Stalham Yuletide Market

Everything is ready to go for the Stalham Yuletide Market on Sunday 4th December from 1pm until 5pm. Writes Di Cornell.

The whole High Street will be closed with a variety of festive stalls, crafts, food, drink, gifts, toys, garden and wooden gifts, Christmas wreaths and decorations, tombola and raffles along the High Street. The Town Hall, and Baptist Schoolroom will also be crammed with stalls selling a variety of goods. St Mary's Church will be dazzling with Decorated Trees for the Annual Christmas tree Festival and live music will be taking place all afternoon. AND the Baptist Stables will host Santa, giving away free gifts to children. (gifts sponsored by Trett Phillips). The Baptist Church itself will have musical entertainment from The

Walcott Warblers, and from Papajam, a father and daughter duo who will be singing for us during the afternoon. Papajam will be performing at 1pm and again at 3pm with the Walcott Warblers singing carols and festive songs at about 2pm. As well as Father Christmas making a magical appearance at about 2.30pm in the Baptist Stables and giving out presents, we are hoping



to have Facepainting for children. Teas, coffee and cakes will be available in the Stables as well as "Good as new and new clothes." Local author Peter Tye will be reading stories from his Little Red Tractor books in the Baptist Church, or maybe even the Stables or both. Peter will also be selling copies of his Books for children. Peter has been visiting events for some years but this will be his last public appearance. Please make time to bring your children and listen to his stories. Peter will be in the Stables from 1pm until 5pm with his books. We are hoping that the weather will be favorable and kind to us at Stalham, so please come along, support your local town, independent businesses and unique stalls which will be visiting us for the afternoon. .

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT GIFT

We are approaching that season of the year when up and down this land people will be asking questions such as.....

What would you like for Christmas? But maybe a better question to ask is **what are your needs... and not just for Christmas!?** Writes John Leaf.

The bible proclaims that 2000 years ago God sent the perfect gift of His son Jesus Christ.

Matthew's gospel chapter 2 verse 7 says.... 'And she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.'

There was no room for Jesus to be born at the inn but if we make room for Him in our hearts, we receive four precious gifts that can meet our deepest needs....

Hope joy peace love

1. **Hope** John chapter 3 verse 16 says 'for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

2. **Joy** The deep spiritual joy that comes from God involves having a sense of wellbeing regardless of your circumstances. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength' Nehemiah chapter 8 verse 10

3. **Peace** In John's gospel chapter 14 verse 27 Jesus said 'peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

4. **Love** The love God offers to all through Jesus is a love that is the highest form of love. It was love that held Jesus on the cross, His love for you and me.

Jesus Christ the perfect gift

Whatever gifts you may receive this Christmas may they be a blessing to you but remember the blessings that come from God through Jesus are available to everyone.

Hope joy peace love



A Donkey's Tale

From where I stood it was a strange sight. I'd done all the donkey work – that was a long trip with a heavily pregnant woman on my back.

Her husband was getting a bit desperate as we neared Bethlehem and we moved at a quicker pace, yes, to put it politely I was a little tired. So, a stable was brilliant for me. Somewhere to lie down, plenty of straw, a drink of water, bit of company from a couple of cows.

After the panic of the baby's birth things settled down, his mum had that radiant look that mums have when holding their baby for the first time. I thought I could get some sleep now.

Wrong!! First of all the whole place was lit up by a star, OK I got used to that but then all the visitors started to turn up. First some shepherds who knelt at the manger and talked to the parents about messages from angels.

Then, unbelievably, three kings also knelt at the manger – which seemed odd, I've done the Temple

trips palace trips, etc. and normally all the kneeling is done by my passengers to people dressed in their finery, very strange. They gave gifts to the parents, for the baby; the parents seemed a bit surprised and slightly bemused by the whole thing, but were very gracious.

There was talk of the baby going on to be something special; a King, a Messiah, someone who was going to change everything.

Now I live in the real world, well Judea, and there were no pigs in the stable to fly anywhere, so let's apply some logic to this. His dad is a carpenter, they have left a simple home behind, have little money and they have travelled, as I can testify, an awfully long way so the baby isn't likely to get an education and will grow up to be a carpenter just like his dad.

No chance then! Not in this world where wealth and power is all that matters. I wouldn't be putting my last bale of straw on it.

Nice thought though. You know what I mean, someone from humble beginnings like most of my passengers, could change everything. Hmm. No No! It will never happen. I think it's time to sleep, been a long day.

Written by David Child



Merry Christmas



STALHAM BAPTIST CHURCH NOTICE BOARD



Over 60s Table Tennis Club

Every Wednesday
In SBC Schoolroom
Next to the Church
9.30 to 12noon

No annual subscription just a donation.
Coffee, tea and biscuits always available

The club has been going since 2008
It's a great way to get some exercise and
have a chat

For more info call Stewart on 07421129812

Coffee and Chat

In the Stables at Stalham Baptist Church

Every Tuesday Morning

9.00 to 12noon

Please feel free to drop in at any time and
stay warm with a tea or a coffee and a chat
with friends. You may like to have a scone,
bacon roll, or cakes

and also look at the bric-a-brac table.

A donations box is available and in
November it raised £500

for the British Legion.

Community Fridge

The Community Fridge has become a
social hub with people coming in for a
chat and local people donating produce
from their gardens and allotments -
Tesco donates regularly with produce
that would otherwise go to waste.

Magazines, books and puzzles are
available as well.

The Community Fridge is open
Mondays 2.00 pm - 4.00pm - Tuesday
to Friday 10.00am to 12 noon.

Get regular updates on what's available by
going to the Stalham Community Fridge
Facebook page.

Open For Prayer

SBC is open for prayer

Monday to Friday 10 to 12pm

Ron or Jerry is there if you would
like a chat.

Online Service

If you cannot make it to a Sunday service
you can find the service online

Go to <https://www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/>

Then click on the box which says join our
Sunday online service.

You can listen to the weekly 5 minute blog
by clicking on Forum and then clicking on
Public Forum and then on
Scripture Reading Plan.

You can also find copies of the newsletters in the
Public Forum.

You can get more info about SBC at

www.stalhambaptist.org.uk

www.facebook.com/stalhambaptist

<https://twitter.com/StalhamChurch>



Do They Know It's Christmas?

In 1983 Ethiopia was suffering from an extremely widespread famine which continued to 1985. It is estimated that up to 1.2 million people perished, 2.5 million people were internally displaced and 400,000 refugees left Ethiopia. Almost 200,000 children were orphaned.

As a fundraiser, Bob Geldof, the front man for Boomtown rats, organised the charity

supergroup Band Aid and the concert Live Aid. The event drew an estimated 1.5 billion television viewers and he co-wrote, with Midge Ure,

"Do They Know It's Christmas?" The song was released in the United Kingdom on 3rd December 1984. It went straight to number one in the Singles Chart and stayed there for five weeks, becoming Christmas number one. It sold a million copies in the first week, becoming the fastest-selling single in UK chart history; holding this title until 1997 when it was overtaken by Elton John's "Candle in the Wind 1997" **written and recorded as a tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales.**

Geldof re-released the song in September 1997, hoping it would raise £70,000 for Ethiopia; within a year, it raised £8 million. The original version of "Do They Know It's Christmas?" had sold 3.8 million copies in the UK. In a recent interview by Victoria Johns of the Daily Mirror Geldof said, "It won't be long before all the **Christmas** classics will be played on a loop – but the Band Aid's offering drives me mad as the song has a life of its own now".

It is estimated that the charity single, "Do They Know It's Christmas?" has raised £200 million and every time it's played in a supermarket and shops, alongside other Christmas songs, it raises funds and is still helping the battle against famine in Africa.

So where are we this Christmas?

Look around the world, would we sing again "Do they know it's Christmas?"

As many as 828 million people will go to bed hungry at Christmas as the number of those facing acute food insecurity has soared – from 135 million to 345 million – since 2019. A total of 50 million people in 45 countries are teetering on the edge of famine. Will they know it's Christmas?

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warn that acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in 19 countries or situations – called hunger

hotspots – during the outlook period from October 2022 to January 2023.

Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen remain at the highest alert level, as they all have populations facing, or projected to face, starvation, or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions as they have already critical food insecurity and are facing severe aggravating factors. These countries require the most urgent attention.

Thirty-eight years on from the release of "Do They Know It's Christmas?" Ethiopia is suffering from acute food insecurity caused by hostilities and drought. In Southern Ethiopia a fifth consecutive failed rainy season has created the severest drought in living memory. It is estimated that 10 million people are already actually food insecure and overall, in 2022, 20.4 million people

were estimated to be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance: including the 13 million food insecure people in northern Ethiopia. Will they know it's Christmas?

This Christmas people will be living in poverty, in war zones, facing the challenges of global warming, seeking new lives after escaping persecution and wars. In our own country many will be homeless; others will be struggling to stay warm on Christmas Day, to have a Christmas meal, to buy presents. Will they know it's Christmas?

Around the world many people will know it's Christmas but in reality, it will just be another cold day, another day of floods, wildfires, being hungry, living in makeshift shelters, worrying about a nuclear war, hiding as missiles explode around their homes and praying they will survive.

They will know it's Christmas, but it will not be as most of us know it. Part of the lyrics of "Do they know It's Christmas" say:

*But say a prayer,
Pray for the other ones
At Christmas time it's hard,
but when you're having fun
There's a world outside your window
And it's a world of dread and fear
Where the only water flowing
Is the bitter sting of tears
And the Christmas bells that ring there
are the clanging chimes of doom
Well, tonight thank God it's them instead of you.*

Pictured. Tiru is a 25-year-old widowed mother of five, in Miyo, Oromia Region, considered one of the worst affected drought areas in southern Ethiopia.

Bob Geldof source Wikimedia Commons

For more information about the global food crisis and World Food Program go to

<https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>



Tools for Staying Warm Through The Winter



SBC Warm Space

There's little doubt that we are in a crisis this winter in the face of energy and fuel price inflation. People in our community are facing a stark choice between food and warmth. Stalham Baptist Church Warm Space in the Stables

opened on Monday October 17th

The Warm Space is a venue where people can gather for free in a warm, safe, welcoming place and enjoy a hot drink, play some board games, have some company and a chat. Everyone is welcome.

Opening times:

Monday 2.00 to 4.00pm

Wednesday 10.00 to 12.00pm

Thursday 10.00am to 2.00pm Soup will be served from 12.00 to 2.00pm.

A thank you to Stuart at Tesco's for their donations for this project.

Stay Warm at Stalham Library

Stalham Library has supplies of warm and well bags, which include: vest, scarf, hat, hot water bottle etc. They also have toiletries: deodorant,

shampoo, body wash, toothbrush for adults and children and Tricky period bags of sanitary items for people to take for free.

They are also offering warm drinks and soup during staffed hours if people would like to come in, have a drink and get warm for free.

All subject to availability and funding.

During Christmas Stalham Library will have a series of Christmas activities, look on their Facebook page for more information.

Ideas to stay warm indoors

Every day the media is full of talk about the cold weather and energy costs. Just a few ideas to help keep you and your home warmer:

1. Have your radiators bled; air in the system reduces the heat output.
2. Don't have furniture right up against radiators leave a space to allow the heat to circulate.
3. On a sunny day keep your curtains open as long as possible to build up heat in your rooms then close them to keep the heat in.
4. Insulate doors and windows to stop draughts.
5. Rugs on the floor or on top of other carpets help keep the room warm.
6. Close windows and doors to keep heat in.
7. Used carefully candles give a cosy feel to a room and give out a little bit of heat. They are also useful if there are any power cuts through the winter.
8. Wearing multiple thin layers will keep you warmer than a single thicker layer, because **warm air is trapped between the layers acting as an insulator**. If you were then to remove a layer you would reduce the amount of heat trapped which would cool you down.
9. Put bedspreads on top of duvets on cold nights.
10. Throws on soft furnishing can also be used as wraparounds on a cold night.

NHS - Help with heating costs

You may be able to claim financial and practical help with heating your home. Grants available include the [GOV.UK Winter Fuel Payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/winter-fuel-payment) and the [Cold Weather Payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cold-weather-payment).

For more information on how to reduce your bills and make your home more energy efficient, go to [GOV.UK Find ways to save energy in your home](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-ways-to-save-energy-in-your-home), or call the government helpline on [0800 444 202](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/0800-444-202).

You can also find out about [benefits and financial support if you're on a low income at GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/benefits-and-financial-support-if-youre-on-a-low-income).

It's worth claiming all the benefits you're entitled to as soon as winter begins.

Look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

Check on older neighbours and relatives, and those

Keep Warm and Well this Winter



Available for FREE
In all Norfolk Libraries

Visit your local library to pick up FREE bags of winter essentials

Keep Warm and Well Bag (adult or child)

A bag contains: Gloves, socks, scarf, blanket, hot-water bottle and hat.

Thermal vests on request in a range of sizes to fit adults and children.

Toiletries Bag

Adult bag contains: Deodorant, bodywash, shampoo, toothpaste. Toothbrushes on request.

Child bag contains: Shampoo, bodywash, bubble bath, toothpaste. Toothbrushes on request.

Tricky Period

Bag contains: 1 x pack of regular pads and 1 x pack of super or night pads.



If you can't see what you need, please ask a member of staff.
We will also have free hot drinks available during staffed library hours.

borrow discover connect

Norfolk County Council

with heart or breathing (respiratory) problems, to make sure they:

- are safe and well
- are warm enough, especially at night
- have stocks of food and medicines so they do not need to go out during very cold weather

If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact your [local council](#) or call the Age UK helpline on [0800 678 1602](tel:08006781602) (8am to 7pm every day).

If you're concerned the person may have hypothermia, contact [NHS 111](tel:111).

For more information go to the NHS website @ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/>



SBC is a collection and distribution point for the Foodbank and is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive

donations for the food bank and personal prayer. Jerry or Ron are always on hand for anyone who needs help. The **Food Bank** at SBC is open on Fridays in the Stables, 1.15 to 3.00pm.

We don't think anyone in our community should have to face going hungry. That's why SBC is working with the North Norfolk Foodbank to provide nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to us in a crisis.

A big thank you to all those who donate to the food bank in the current economic climate helping many people across the age spectrum.

Energy Bank

The Energy Bank will support households most in need of help by giving them Energy Top Ups to pay for gas and electricity alongside emergency food aid.

How to get help

If you need help, or know someone in difficulty, either contact the Citizens Advice Service 0344 411 1444, the Food Bank on 07826376343, or contact Ron Skivington at minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Met Office - Keeping your home warm this winter

It's important to keep your home warm to avoid health problems.

Why can cold weather be bad for your health?

The cold thickens blood and increases blood pressure and breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections. So, it's all the more important to ensure your home and the homes of people you look out for are the right temperature.

What temperature should rooms be in winter?

Ideally you should heat your home to a temperature

of at least 18 °C. This is particularly important if you have reduced mobility, are 65 or over, or have a health condition, such as heart or lung disease. Having room temperatures slightly over 18 °C could be good for your health.

If you are under the age of 65, active and wearing appropriate clothing, you may wish to keep your home at a comfortable temperature even if it is slightly lower than 18°C.

Overnight, people who are 65 and over or who have pre-existing health conditions may find bedroom temperatures of at least 18 °C are good for their health; this may be less important if you are a healthy adult under 65 and have appropriate clothing and bedding.

It is important to keep your bedroom window closed at night when the weather is cold.

Norfolk Warm Homes Keeping Norfolk Warm

By working to improve the energy-efficiency of the homes with the lowest EPC ratings of E, F and G, we are helping some of the most vulnerable people in Norfolk reduce their energy bills and their carbon footprint. We take a 'whole home' approach, first installing insulation and then potentially other measures including energy efficient air source heat pumps, depending on the suitability of your property. We also provide expert advice and support to improve people's energy efficiency, helping people to live in a warmer home and reduce energy usage. Less energy used means a smaller energy bill, and reduces the county's carbon footprint, helping to achieve the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050.

Who's it for?

Anyone can contact us for help or advice on saving energy and benefits checks. Grants to help you insulate and heat your home are available for people who have a gross income of under £30,000 and live in a home with an EPC rating of E, F or G. Contact us to find out if we can help you with a grant. Homeowners Tenants and Landlords.

Norfolk councils are working in partnership to deliver heating and insulation grants to the county's residents.

Norfolk Warm Homes is a partnership programme, led by Broadland District Council, working with Norwich City Council, South Norfolk District Council, North Norfolk District Council, the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, Breckland District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Our aim is to support low income residents, reduce energy bills and increase the thermal comfort of their homes.

Norfolk Warm Homes is grant funded by National Grid (administered by Affordable Warmth Solutions CIC) and Central Government. For more information go to <https://norfolkwarmhomes.org.uk/>

Town Council News

The first meeting of the Chamber of Commerce took place last month and was well received by those present. The Clerk is still adding names to the list of those interested in joining, so please get in touch if you manage, or own, a local business so that you can be included in the next event.

As part of the work taking place at the Stalham Staithe the Council has ordered a noticeboard to be put onto the picnic area. This should be installed shortly and enable the Council to improve communication which is one of the aims of the Strategic Plan.

There are only a couple of allotments available following the annual renewal this year, prices have been held over at last year's rates, if you would like to take on an allotment please get in touch with the office.

The Town Council Newsletter is proving very popular – but delivery is a real task for the Councillors! Council does not want to pay for delivery, or reduce the number delivered, so if you have some time and would be prepared to deliver the Newsletter in your Road or area of Stalham please do let us know.

The Town Council has been working with other agencies over the safety concerns on the A149 and welcomes the news that a Highways Safety Review will be undertaken. This would not have been achieved without the local support and representation.

Another SAM 2 speed camera location has been approved and brought into action in Stalham – which has shown that traffic entering the Town from Somerton is not speeding at unusual rates – but that traffic leaving the town along Yarmouth Road is



breaking the speed limit at notable levels. Could all road users please watch their speed within the Town, the Council is working with the local police teams to ensure that limits are adhered to.

The Neighbourhood Plan continues on schedule, and to date costs have been entirely grant funded. If you would like any information please contact the Office.

The Town Council, along with other Councils at all levels, is currently looking at budget setting for the 2023/24 financial year. Councillors are working hard to keep costs low in very uncertain times.

To support work in the Town grant funding is being sought wherever possible – Tesco have included the replacement swings at the Recreation Ground in their blue token scheme. Big thankyou to all the people who pop their blue token in the box and support this local project.

The Poppy Centre now has acoustic panels, a projector, screen and sound system installed in the main hall. It is a fabulous venue and if you would like to view it please contact Lolly Dawson on office@stalhamtowncouncil.org For Town Hall bookings contact Sarah Hunt on clerk@stalhamtowncouncil.org

Photo by North Norfolk News



What do harvest, light, buildings and Christmas have in common?



No, it's not the start of a joke or riddle – and sadly you won't win a car or a large amount of cash if you know the answer. However, you will be rewarded with food and fun.

It's Messy Church which takes place on the third Thursday of each month at Stalham Baptist Church between 3.15 and 5pm.

So, do you have to be a farmer for the harvest, electrician for the light, architect for the building or a nativity character to come? No, everyone is welcome, there's no age limit [though under 16s need to be accompanied by an adult.]

How much does it cost? It's free. What will I do if I come? Drinks and biscuits begin the session then there's time for "things to do" which include crafts, games, puzzles and often a food activity [or a sit while you enjoy that cuppa and chat with friends] before the "mini service celebration" at 4 followed around 4.15 by the meal.

And what's the meal? So far we've had BBQ, picnic, jacket potatoes and pizza – followed by yummy cakes.

So how do I find out when to come? Watch the notice board outside Stalham Baptist Church and also Facebook. By the time you get this magazine we'll have had the building one on 17th November, but we'd love to see you at our "Messy Christmas" on 15th December – or any of the meetings in the New Year. God Bless, Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2023 from all the Messy People at SBC and St. Mary's.



What's Happening at SBC



There is always a warm welcome at Stalham Baptist church. We average around 60 to 80 for Sunday services but at Christmas, Easter and for baptisms the congregation can be up to 150. There is a good number of families in the fellowship and a growing number of new faces like Magdalena next to Ron, who decided to become a member of SBC.

A central hub controls a sound system and three large screens for words of songs to be shown as well as videos during the services.

Ron Skivington has been the pastor for over 30 years and comes from Edinburgh while his wife Jane is from the Highlands of Scotland.

We also have an assistant pastor Jerry Otieno who is from Kenya - his wife Simone is from Germany.

During the summer we had families and others on holiday, joining us, some of whom are regular visitors and think of SBC as their holiday church. Recently a lady visitor said "This is a brilliant church. The welcome is genuinely warm."



Services are accompanied by singers and musicians and the atmosphere is very relaxed which is very much Ron Skivington's style.

The pictures show that youngsters are an important part of each Sunday, a portion of the service revolving around them before going to the school room for activities which may include craft work, making biscuits or creating a play based on a bible story - but most of all having lots of fun.

SBC is a lively friendly place to come to on a Sunday. The services usually last just over an hour followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a

chat in the Stables Why not come and join us?



For Your Diary

Sunday December 4th in the Stables

Alongside the Yuletide Fayre. New and as Good as New clothes sale. Teas, cakes and mince pies served 1.00 to 4.00pm. All proceeds to the building fund. Father Christmas will also be visiting.

Wednesday 7th December in the Stables.

Beetle Drive with Christmas afternoon tea. 2.00 to 4.00pm All donations to SBC Building Fund. Please book with Elaine on 07796875785 or elainesmith364@btinternet.com

Thursday 8th & Friday 9th December in the Schoolroom

Christmas Craft Fayre 10 to 3.30pm

All welcome For more information contact Edna 01692 582633

Tuesday 14th February 2023 in the Stables

St Valentine's Quiz with a Supper and Puds. 6.30pm. £7.00 per person Please book with Elaine on 07796875785 or elainesmith364@btinternet.com

Saturday 25th March 2023 in the Stables

Clocks Go Forward Coffee Morning. Cakes and light lunches 10.00 to 2.00pm. Bric-a-Brac and Jigsaws. All proceeds to Charity

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LEPROSY AND HOUSE OF THE DRAGON

Game of Thrones prequel *House of the Dragon* has got people talking about leprosy. Following recent episodes of the hit show, fans have been wondering what

mystery illness could be affecting King Viserys, causing him to develop sores on his skin and suffer from deteriorating health. Paddy Considine, who plays Viserys, has recently explained that his character is suffering with leprosy. In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly's* West of Westeros podcast, he revealed: "He's actually suffering from a form of leprosy. His body is

deteriorating, his bones are deteriorating. He is not actually old. He's still a young man in there. He's just, unfortunately got this thing that's taken over his body. It becomes a metaphor for being king, and the stress and strain that it puts on you, and what it does to you physically, what it does to you mentally."

In the later seasons of the original show, the much-feared disease was greyscale, which causes the appearance of the skin to change. Those affected by greyscale were shunned by society and forced to live away from others. This was often the reality for people affected by leprosy in Europe in the Middle Ages, and remains a problem for many of the people we support today.

Henry and Jan Nicholson responded to a personal invitation along with other supporters of the Leprosy Mission to attend an Afternoon Tea with Pam Rhodes at Norwich Cathedral on Friday 30th September. Pam, (pictured with Henry) who hosted the afternoon is Vice President of the Leprosy Mission and she shared her experiences of Leprosy in Nepal and Bangladesh and also the stories of the people she met who were Leprosy sufferers themselves and the challenges they faced including the stigma that is attached to the disease. They write "We were shown a film about a lady named Sudha Rani who Pam met in Bangladesh, whose life was spent in a wheelchair having had both legs amputated due to Leprosy but whose face beamed as she shared how the hospital had helped her."

Pam then interviewed two of her guests, Dan and Babs Izzett who were from South Africa. They were working in the Bush in Rhodesia and had quite an affluent lifestyle but in 1972 Dan was diagnosed with Leprosy. He had had symptoms in his body in the 1960's but was misdiagnosed and treated for years for another disease. He was correctly diagnosed with Leprosy soon after being married and he offered to have the

marriage annulled but his wife, although shocked at the news, would not hear of it and feared that he might be taken away. When their son was 6 weeks old, she also tested positive for Leprosy but received treatment immediately and was cured. Dan had lost all sensations in his body as Leprosy attacks the nerves and enlarges them; it also dries up the skin. His hands had been affected and were deformed and he had lost a finger. Also one of his legs had to be amputated and in the course of time he had been fitted



Sudha Rani

with 29 Prosthetic limbs and has lived with pain for the last 50 years. The drugs prescribed for the Leprosy killed off the bacteria but dumped them in the body; consequently he had cabbage ears, blotches on his skin and was in hospital with infectious diseases. It was while he was in hospital that suddenly a bright light filled his room and Jesus was there. Jesus still visits Leprosy

sufferers just as He did in the bible stories. Dan's Pastor and his wife both noticed the change in him during their hospital visits and commented how different he was, after which his health started to improve and his life changed. He knew that God was going to do things in their lives.

Dan and his wife went to India, Indonesia, Katmandu and were heartbroken to see the Leprosy sufferers there. They spent time talking and sharing with them, offering relief and support. They continue to serve the Leprosy Mission and highlighted that Jesus told his disciples to preach the gospel, heal the sick and cleanse the Lepers.



Leprosy starts by damaging the nerves closest to the skin. The first signs of the disease are often paler patches of skin that have lost sensation. If left untreated, this can lead to injuries, which then cause ulcers, and muscle paralysis that can affect hands, feet and eyes. Leprosy is not a

fatal illness, but it can cause a lot of complications that can severely affect people's health.

Wellesley Bailey, the founder of the Leprosy Mission famously said "The Leprosy Mission, Gods Mission, was born and cradled in prayer". Many churches have supported it over many years and we, as Christians are all involved in the fight against Leprosy. New research is going on in Anandaban Hospital in the foothills of Nepal where the Lab is being updated. They are working on a fingerprint test to diagnose the disease and a new vaccine is under clinical trials, preventative antibiotics can be given. Ulcer treatment is being developed whereby instead of taking 7 months to heal they can dry up in only 7 weeks. The treatment can also help with hair loss and it can use the body's own resources to heal ulcers.

For more information about the Leprosy Mission go to <https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/>
Photos from Leprosy Mission.

Have you a Forgotten Bank Account?

As money savings tips we ought to ensure we are not still paying direct debits for phones or other items like insurance policies or warranties we no longer have or need and have we any forgotten bank accounts that may still have a credit balance in them as banks are holding millions of £ in dormant accounts on behalf of unaware customers. Writes Ron Skivington

If we have either of the above it may be fairly small change but imagine if there was a substantial inheritance with your name on it only you don't know about it you so can't access it, or what about there being an inheritance that you have been robbed of or cheated out of so basically it has been stolen from you. How would you feel, what would you want to do about it, can you do anything to inherit what is rightfully yours?

It may surprise you that is the case for so many people but before you start seeing ££ signs before your eyes and dreaming about what you could do with the money let me tell you your possibly unknown, lost or stolen inheritance is in fact part of the Christmas story. Yes it's about angels, shepherds and wise men all coming to find and greet a new born baby who is called Christ the Lord, but that story, that historical event has implications for each one of us whether we want to believe it or not, whether we celebrate Christmas or not that stretch way beyond a stable somewhere in Bethlem over 2,000 years ago. Our story begins at the dawn of time and goes on until time as we know it is no more. It starts with the word given to usher in the 6th day of creation "and God said let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness" [Gen 1: 26] That's it, that's your rightful inheritance, you were created in the image of the Living God. That might not sound terribly exciting but it is in fact an incredible thought and fact, the Creator God who designed and planned everything made you to be like Him.

That doesn't mean physically rather it is to do with the various capabilities and responsibilities we have as people unfortunately our forefathers were tempted to believe they could be gods, to be equal to God in all sorts of ways which we never can be but that led to all the potentiality wrapped up in being human became lost just like we read about all sorts of treasures and riches that once were owned by particular people, kingdoms or empires vanishing from sight, the sort of treasures that are still be hunted for today by explorers and adventurers, they would be much simpler to find if we only had a map with an X marks the spot. Actually we do, it's called the Bible, and it tells us of how from the day it all went wrong, from the day the world's greatest and most audacious theft took place, God was working to lead us to the path and the way to find our rightful inheritance once more and He planned precisely how we acquire it and that required the birth of His Son and the X marks the spot is found in Jesus' words to His friends "I am the way the Truth and the Life" [Jn 14:6] Jesus also told us "I have come so that you may have life and life abundantly" [Jn 10:10] The treasure Jesus gives may not be gold doubloons or diamond encrusted tiara's and a large bank balance, it is about inner peace, a clear conscience, a wiped clean slate, joy like no other, being loved unconditionally and the privilege of being part of the Worlds No 1 family. If you want to start unlocking what can be yours a good place to begin is coming to the crib for wise men still seek Him and those who seek Him will find the answer to their quest.



Will you be an adventurer this Christmas? If so happy seeking but be aware Jesus hides in plain sight.



The Secret of Chapel Field

Many of us may often walk down the road called Chapel Field Rd. that can be found just off the A149 at the Weavers Way end of Stalham High Street. The road is a lovely circular walk taking you past Stalham Staithe.

The name Chapel Field comes from the fact it was the site of a Leper Chapel in Medieval times. The chapel was believed to have been situated close to Hunsett Mill on the river Ant.

In the church of St James in Dunwich Suffolk you can find the remains of a leper chapel (pictured) and it is believed a hall existed for the lepers to live in. The chances are that the building at Chapel Field would have looked very similar. During the Middle Ages, there was no cure for leprosy, and it was believed to be highly contagious [though we now know it is not.] The main treatment was containment with a

medicine of boiled toads and barley. Sufferers were isolated from healthy people, would wear bandages to cover their sores and carried a bell to warn people that they were coming.



Ofcom are you Struggling to afford your Broadband?

Who is Ofcom? They are the regulator for the communications services that we use and rely on each day.

Ofcom says "Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband."

They're delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price. Amid rising living costs, Ofcom is encouraging companies to offer social tariffs to help customers on low incomes.

How a social tariff could help you

It's available to those on a variety of benefits. If you or someone in your household claims Universal Credit, you could switch to any of the tariffs available.

It's cheaper than a regular package. Current prices range from £10 to £20.

Fast, unlimited broadband. Most tariffs offer superfast broadband at speeds over 30 Mbit/s – fast enough for you to keep in touch with friends and family, stream HD films or shop online.

You'll pay next-to-nothing to get set up. If you do have to pay any setup costs, these should only be small. Your provider should tell you before you sign up.

It could cost nothing to switch. If your provider offers a social tariff, you can switch to it at any time, free of charge.

The price won't go up mid-contract. You won't pay any

more than what you agree at the start of the contract. **It costs nothing to leave.** You won't pay a fee to leave the tariff before the end of your contract.

Some providers offer cheaper broadband packages that are only available to customers on certain benefits. BT and KCOM also provide cheaper voice-only landline tariffs to eligible households. Details of these are in the BT and KCOM links below.

Who could qualify

If you or someone in your household claims Universal Credit, you could switch to any of the tariffs available. Some providers also include people on other benefits such as Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance, and Income Support. The person receiving the benefit will need to be the main person on the contract.

How to apply

First, check if your current provider offers a social tariff. Ofcom lists all of the tariffs available now. You can apply for most tariffs online, or call your provider and ask to switch.

If your provider doesn't offer a social tariff, you can switch to one that does. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee.

To find out more go to <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/home> and click on Struggling to afford your phone or broadband.



YOU WOULD BE OUT OF A JOB AT CHRISTMAS

One Christmas time a vicar asked the children in his church "If Jesus hadn't been born what difference would it make?" Writes Rev. Ron Skivington.

He got the usual answers - no Christmas trees, presents, nativity plays etc. After the service a boy about 10 years old sidled up and said "If there was no Jesus you would be out of a job!!"

We once performed a play called "Away with the manger" at a candlelight service. It starts with 2 reporters wanting to share the story with a photo of the baby in the manger and gradually Mary and Joseph, associated animals, shepherds, angels, kings, Santa, reindeer etc all get added to the picture until someone decides the tatty box used as a crib at the front is spoiling the photo and so it gets thrown out.

In many ways Christmas does happen without Jesus; people still have parties, presents, food and fun at the end of December as cards with pictures of robins, snow scenes and happy "Season's Greetings" show.

One December an American family hosted a Russian rabbi and, after eating out at a Chinese restaurant, they were all presented with a small brass Christmas tree as a seasonal gift. Tears trickled down the Rabbi's face. "Was he upset?" his host asked. "Oh no" he replied "I was crying tears of joy to be in a country where a Buddhist gives a Jew a Christmas present made by a Hindu".

So, in a way Christmas does affect us all whether we believe or not and that means all sorts of things get added in and taken away from the story to suit our traditions. What is the meaning then behind

Christmas? It can be summed up by the 4 year old singing "We wish you a happy Christmas and a happy new you."

God sent His son to be born in our world, who grew up as a refugee, always materially poor, hated by many of His own even after doing lots of good things; who suffered the agony of a painful and cruel death for all the wrong things we have done that hurt God and we, by believing Jesus acted as our substitute, can have the past wiped clean, be given a new life in this world and for the one to come - and it is all a free gift!

How often do we hear "I don't know what to get so and so" or "What would you like for Christmas?"

The best gift we can give, or receive, is God's free gift of a new you through Jesus.

What Shall Separate us from God's Love

On the 25th of October, death was cruel to my family and me and separated us from our lovely 13-month-old girl, *Anna Luo Otieno*.

Like many of our friends and family, we are incredibly shocked by her sudden death and are still trying to make sense of it all. Jerry writes. However, amidst the deep pains of separation and loss, God has been kind to us and has brought us comfort daily through his Spirit, his word and his people. We are comforted that though separated from us, Anna is safely wrapped in Jesus' loving arms and that one day we will meet again.

In the Bible, the Apostle Paul addresses the worry people have about being separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In Romans 8:31-39, he seeks to answer the lingering question, *"Who or what can separate believers from the love of God?"* In other words, can those who believe in God be separated from his love the way our darling daughter has been separated from us? **Paul asks four questions** to help us reflect on God's love for his people. The answers to these questions have been a daily source of hope for us and can be to anyone, no matter what we go through.

The **first question** is, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* v 31. Paul's question, *"who can be against us?"* does not mean to suggest that Christians have no enemies. His point is that no opposition can overcome us when God is our **Protector**. Since God is for us, he makes all things work together for our ultimate good, even those which our enemies intend for our harm. Because God is our Powerful **Protector** and the giver of salvation, no one or nothing can defeat us finally.

The **second question** is from verse 32, *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* What Paul is getting at is that since God has done the unspeakably great and costly thing of giving his only son for us, we can be fully confident that He will do what is, by comparison, far less, i.e. providing for our needs. Since God is a generous **Provider**, he guarantees that he'll provide everything essential for our eternal happiness and salvation. And so, as a family, we trust God to provide for everything we need for our journey through grief. In giving us His Son, God gave us everything and met our greatest need with his greatest

gift. Hence, the cross is the guarantee of the continuing, unfailing generosity of God.

The **third question** in v 33 is, *"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."* Again, Paul's point is not to deny that anyone will ever charge or condemn us. His point is that all such accusations will be unsuccessful. It isn't because we are perfect and innocent. Such charges fail because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has already paid the penalty they demand. Who then can

condemn believers in Christ when Christ has been condemned on their behalf?

Paul says in Romans 8:1, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Because Jesus is our **Proponent**, no one or nothing can bring charges against his people.

The **final question** is, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* He asks, *"Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?"* Paul himself had experienced almost all of these examples and had concluded that even these challenging times of suffering could not separate him from the

love of Christ. When he had nothing else, he still had the love of God. Because God had preserved him throughout his hardships, Paul concluded the chapter with those powerful words in vv37-39.

"37 No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As we grieve the sudden death of Anna or as we all endure tough times, may we find encouragement in these four truths;

- Because God is our **Protector**, no one or nothing can successfully be against us,
- Because God is our **Provider**, He will provide us with everything we need,
- Because God is our **Proponent**, no one or nothing can successfully accuse or condemn us and
- Because God is our **Preserver**, no one or nothing can separate us from His love. Amen.



WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED...



Cartoon by Steve English

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