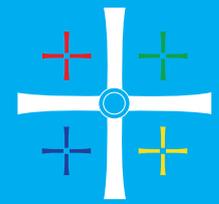


Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

FEBRUARY 2026



We had a wonderful Sunday at Caistor on 18th February hearing about the great work of Hope into Action Norwich, especially Susie's amazing story of a life transformed. You can find a video of Susie's story on the Hope into Action UK Facebook page.

HOPE_{into}
ACTION

NORWICH

Enabling churches to house the homeless

ARMINGHALL, CAISTOR ST EDMUND, STOKE HOLY CROSS with DUNSTON

R.B. COPPING FUNERAL SERVICE

Independent Family Funerals Directors Since 1935

*For Personal Attention
with Dignity and Respect*

Private Chapels of Rest

*Memorials & floral tributes
supplied*

*Pre-paid funeral plans
available*



www.coppingfunerals.co.uk



125 The Street, Poringland, Norwich NR14 7RP
01508 494434

56 Langley Road, Chedgrave, nr Loddon NR14 6HE
01508 521159



• **ALL ASPECTS OF ROOFING
COVERED**

• **FREE QUOTATIONS**

★★★★★ 5 Star Reviews

"Jamie is well experienced in the roofing business, and his customer friendly and helpful attitude also gives confidence in his work. He'll certainly be my only call for any future repairs needed."

"Once again, J H Roofing Solutions did a great job, despite being hampered by the bad weather we've had recently. They visited the house in advance in order to make sure we were watertight and then completed the work as soon as the weather was dry enough."

I said in my previous review that I would have no hesitation in using J H Roofing again and that remains the case. Jamie and Charlie are professional and pleasant to deal with and do a great job."



**J H ROOFING
SOLUTIONS**

✉ jamie@jhroofingsolutions.com

☎ **07415 781971 • 01603 453762**



Recently I have been spending a lot of time listening to a podcast called *Beyond the Happy Clappy*. If you don't know the phrase "happy clappy" you are in good company, because just before our wedding one of Cathryn's extended family asked us if the service was going to be a bit "happy slappy!" it's a slightly mocking term for churches which are characterised by more modern music with a band, and the expectation that the Holy Spirit will be working noticeably as people gather. It's the sort of place where I have spent a lot of my Christian life, and where I feel at home, so I don't tend to say it myself.

The podcast has tried to look back into the history of the happiness and clapping in this country, and especially how it has become so commonplace in the Church of England. At the same time, it is looking at some of the absolutely remarkable things that happened as churches began to embrace this from about 1960 onwards, and wondering about if and when and how we might see them happening again with that same sort of intensity.

It's easy to get nostalgic, especially in these villages where a lot of ministry of that kind, and a lot of remarkable things, were happening in the 80s and 90s. There's a risk that you feel, or communicate, that that was the best of times, and nothing half as good has happened since. But it's also easy to be cynical, and downplay the value of what God was doing then, and the lasting fruit it has had in people's lives.

I don't want to be either of those things. I want to be hungry, and curious. I do that because for myself, I haven't really seen it: I was in church in the 80s and 90s, but by the time I really heard of the Holy Spirit those heady days weren't quite here any more. But I also do it, because I just wonder from things I am hearing on this podcast, and right across the country, if something like that isn't beginning to bubble up again.

Lots of the language I am hearing used as people try to discern what God is saying is to do with old wells being opened up, and new ones being dug. It's being connected with an ancient story in the bible, where Isaac goes back to his father Abraham's wells and does just that; he opens up the old ones, and digs new ones.

In these times of great global uncertainty it might seem odd for me to suggest that the future of our church, and maybe of our nation, is found in a little story tucked deep within the Old Testament. But what if it is? What if we all believed that God could reopen those spiritual wells I have only heard about, and dig new ones in our generation? What if – to quote a very happy-clappy song – we all believed that we would see him do it again?

Rob

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund.
Rob Baker, The Vicarage, Mill Road, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PA
rob@venta-group.org 01508 492305

CURATE

Kirsty Long, 1 Ponsonby Way, Poringland, NR14 7FJ
kirstylong204@gmail.com 07878 047289, 01508 830368

For all administrative enquiries please contact admin@venta-group.org

Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"
www.venta-group.org  [@venta_group](https://www.youtube.com/@venta_group)

CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston
Viv (493438)

Arminghall
Rob (492305)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (07557 774520) & Lia

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Karen (07761 076954)
email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

STOKE HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY HALL BOOKINGS:

email: shc.communityhall@gmail.com
<https://www.shc-communityhall.com>

FROM THE REGISTERS

We continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones recently, or are remembering someone particularly at this time of year.

FUNERAL & BURIAL

DIANA EVANS

20th January at Caistor

BURIAL OF ASHES

MARK PECK

22nd January at Stoke

FUNERAL

KEITH NUDDS

23rd January at St Faith's Crematorium

We are always happy to record the names of anyone from the villages whose funeral has been held recently, even if it wasn't taken by a member of our ministry team.

FOR ALL COPY PLEASE

send by email to Rob to
admin@venta-group.org

By 10th of this month please.

Give Your Wellbeing a Boost!

Are you always looking out for other people?

Do you sometimes feel stressed and overwhelmed?

Take some time out for yourself, and give your wellbeing a much needed boost!

Adult Learning have a wide range of courses to calm, destress and relax, all whilst having fun and making new friends! From arts and crafts to health and fitness.

Check out the full range:



SCAN ME



www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning
0344 800 8020 (option 5)

Moving On

After two and a half years serving as a curate in the Poringland and Venta group of churches it's time for me to say goodbye. This will be my last article for the Free For All magazine as I prepare to move to Mattishall at the end of this month to take on my new position as the Rector at the Mattishall and Tudd Valley Benefice.

During my time here I have met many lovely people, learnt a great deal and have had a truly amazing couple of years and will be sad to go but am excited to see what God has planned for me as I serve him in my new parishes.

Over the last few weeks as I have had much to sort out this bible verse from Jeremiah has really encouraged me,

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

The same passage which encouraged me before I started my role here as a curate and as I explored ordained ministry and began to study.

To know God has a plan for me has been reassuring especially during the difficult times of my training and curacy and now as I look to leaving the security of what my curacy brings and begin in a new place with new people and expectations which I am unaware of.

Just as God knows the plans he has for me, he too knows the plans he has for you - plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. But are you willing to step out in faith and trust him in whatever situation you find yourself in at the moment. It may be a time of excitement or a time of uncertainty or both, but God is already there, walking ahead of you, if you want him to be.

As I prepare to move on, I do so with thanks for all that has been during my time in the Poringland and Venta Group communities and with hope for all that is to come as I begin my new ministry in Mattishall and Tudd Valley. I would like to thank all those who have offered me kindness, support and encouragement since I arrived here, it's been great to serve God in this place.

I wish you all the very best in the future and pray that we will all may remain open to where God is calling us next, trusting in his plans and being reassured in his promises.

With much love & Prayers

Kirsty



All Invited in 2026: everyone's welcome

Sundays from 3.30-5pm

11th Jan, 8th Feb, 8th March at the Church Hall

25th Jan, 22nd Feb, 22nd March at the Vicarage

Easter Special on Good Friday 3rd April

Activities, crafts and games for all ages Space to reflect and time to chat

Community Pantry: help yourself or contribute

Pop in for cakes, drinks and chat, or stay and eat together



Venta Group of Churches: Stoke Holy Cross, Caistor and Arminghall | rob@venta-group.org



Kirsty is moving on to be the new Rector of the Mattishall and Tudd Valley benefice. You can read a bit more about that elsewhere in this magazine, and take the chance to come and say goodbye on one of the following occasions: Kirsty's last working event will be the Sunday morning service at Stoke on 22nd February. Kirsty's official farewell service will be at Poringland on Sunday 1st March at 10am. Everyone is welcome at Kirsty's licensing service at Mattishall on Sunday 8th March at 5pm. Please let Rob know if

- you are planning to come to Mattishall so they can plan accordingly.
- you haven't received an email explaining how to contribute to Kirsty's farewell gift and you would like to!

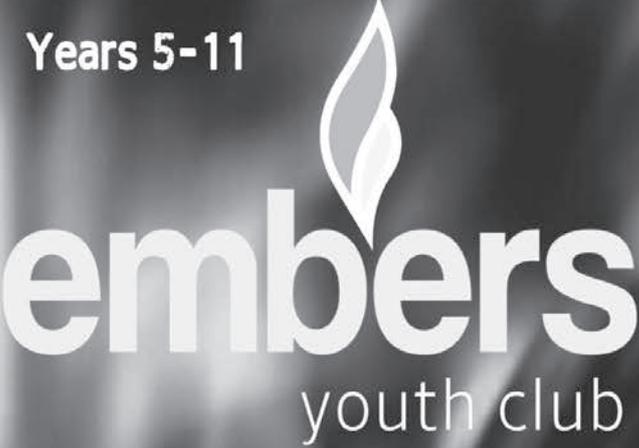
Coffee and chat

Want to meet others?
Come and join us and chat over a drink every Thursday morning except Vintage Church weeks (below)
10.30-11.30am at Stoke Church Hall
15th January (no Coffee and Chat or Communion on 1st Jan)
5th & 19th February
5th & 19th March



Short communion service at 10am
right before Coffee & Chat
on 5th February & 5th March

Years 5-11



embers youth club

**Thursdays
7.30 - 9 pm
Stoke Holy Cross
Church Hall**

JANUARY
15th: Club Night
22nd: New Year, New Dreams
29th: Share-a-Skill

FEBRUARY
5th: Club Night and Quiz
12th: Throwback (Nostalgia Night)
19th: HALF TERM
26th: Club Night plus Tom

For more details contact:
Gary Watson on
gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk

 Norwich YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Venta Group of Churches

 @stoke.embers

More traditional Communion service
10.30am at Stoke Church



Join us every month for well-known hymns,
familiar words from the Church of England
Communion service, and our usual warm
welcome

22nd February - Who is Jesus?
22nd March - Why did Jesus die?
26th April - How can I be sure?

Ash Wednesday & Lent 2026



Ash Wednesday 18th February
10am at Poringland Church

Lent Lunches from 12pm

25th Feb at Fram Earl Parish Church

4th March at Poringland Catholic Church

11th March at St George's Hall

18th March at Fram Earl Methodist Church

25th March at St George's Hall

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

AT PORINGLAND COMMUNITY CENTRE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Film Nights

Friday 6th February • Friday 6th March

Friday 10th April • Friday 1st May

For more information phone

John on 01508 494358 Or Carol on 01508 492630

PORINGLAND COMMUNITY CINEMA

AT PORINGLAND COMMUNITY CENTRE

DOWNTON ABBEY THE GRAND FINALE

FRIDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

CERT PG - Period Drama - Stars Hugh Bonneville and Dominic West

Tickets £5 on the door (includes tea or coffee)

Doors open at 6.45pm | Film starts 7.30pm



Redwings Horse Sanctuary

for a great family day out!

Free Entry.
Parking &
Dog
Friendly!

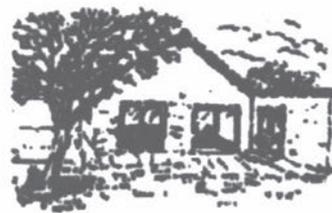
Visit our
Cafe & Gift
Shop



redwings.org.uk/visit



Enjoy some family fun meeting friendly rescued horses and donkeys at Redwings Aylsham and Redwings Caldecott, Norfolk all whilst supporting the UK's largest horse welfare charity.



Surlingham Timeshare Swimming Pool

NR14 7AL

Are you interested in having an indoor heated swimming pool exclusively for yourself, family and friends?

If so please contact

Tim Mack (01508) 538206

info@surlinghamtimesharepool.co.uk

or go to

www.surlinghamtimesharepool.co.uk

3, 6 or 12 monthly bookings for weekly slots available, "also one offs"

Open seven days a week 6.30am-10.00pm

We are 6 miles SE of Norwich between Surlingham and Rockland St. Mary

COOPER HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Double Glazing Repairs
Replacement Sealed Units
Window Hinges, Handles
Door locks • Cat flaps

www.cooperhome.com

01508 480551 07982 711499



**PC or Mac Running Slow?
Bailiwick IT Ltd. Got A Virus? Wi-Fi help?**

For a friendly, professional & prompt IT service, please call Joe Richards on 01953 718421 & 07928 326008

Email: help@bailiwickit.com
Website: www.bailiwickit.com



S & C Window Repairs

Free estimates, no call out charge
Local independent business

Repairs to double glazed windows, doors and conservatories
Steamed up windows, broken handles, hinges, gasket,
plus cat flaps, door panels and more...

01603 520136 | 0800 1601932

sandcwindows@gmail.com

www.sandcwindows.co.uk

CROSSWAYS of ELLINGHAM

99 Yarmouth Road,
Ellingham, NR35 2PH
Opening Times:
Mon - Fri: 8:30 - 5pm
Sat: 9 - 5pm



Equestrian • Pet Food • Livestock
Fishing • Shooting • Clothing



DELIVERY SERVICE

Need something but can't get into shop?

We have a very reliable delivery service which has been running for over 20 years.

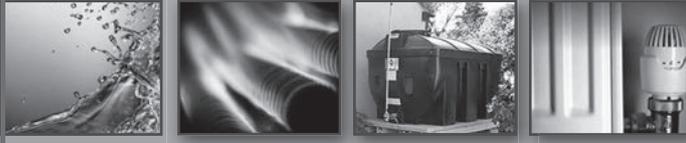
No matter how big or small in the whole store we're happy to help...

01508 518400 | www.crosswaysofellingham.co.uk



TOWNSEND LTD

OIL • GAS • HEATING SERVICES



- Boiler Replacement
- System Upgrade & Maintenance
 - Power Flushing
- Oil Tank Replacement
- OFTEC & Gas Safe Registered
- All at competitive prices

Call today for more information and a free estimate

Matthew Townsend: 07771 732397

Office: 01508 550838

www.jandmtownsendltd.co.uk



Louise Cartwright (M.Ost), Professional Osteopath

Registered with The General Osteopathic Council,
15 Years Experience

**For the treatment of Neck,
Back and Joint pain, Sports injuries
and Rehabilitation.**

Rookery Park Golf Club,
Carlton Colville, NR33 8HJ, 07876255168

Please book online at
www.amyholmesosteopath.co.uk
www.greenviewtherapysuite.co.uk

Also available Tuesdays at Saxon Wellbeing,
Beccles, 01502 717417
appointments@saxonwellbeing.co.uk

- ✓ uPVC Windows & Doors
- ✓ Composite Doors
- ✓ Conservatories
- ✓ Solid Warm Roofs
- ✓ Porches
- ✓ Fascia's & Guttering
- ✓ Carports & Canopies

uPVC Home Improvements



Fully Guaranteed

SSGE

Established 1983



Free Quotations

Contact Us



01603 484574



ssgc.co.uk

WAVENEY STOVES, FIREPLACES & RANGE COOKERS

Range Cookers; Oil, Electric, Gas & Woodfired.
Multifuel, Woodburning & Electric Stoves,
Electric Fires, Fireplace Surrounds

01508 518863

Opening Hours: Tues - Sat 9.30 - 4.30

123a Old Yarmouth Road, Ellingham, NR35 2PG

www.waveneystoves.co.uk



www.mrchimney4u.co.uk

GUILD OF MASTER CHIMNEY SWEEPS MEMBER

I OFFER A PROFESSIONAL, CLEAN AND FRIENDLY
SERVICE/ADVICE

**WOOD BURNERS • MULTI-FUEL STOVES • OPEN FIRES
INSET STOVES • INGLENOOK FIRES • AGA/RAYBURN
GAS/OIL • BIOMASS • CERTIFICATES ISSUED**

info@mrchimney4u.co.uk

01508 493219 OR 07835 757528



PC ASSIST @ HOME QUALITY COMPUTER REPAIR SERVICE

www.pcassistonline.co.uk 01508 471459



01603 555625

www.hubcaresupport.co.uk

Your Care

Your Choice

Your Hub

From
£20ph

Support Includes:

- Companionship • Personal Care • Transport • Meal Preparation
- Domestic Tasks • Assistance with shopping • Respite Care • Live-in Care



CLEANLIVING

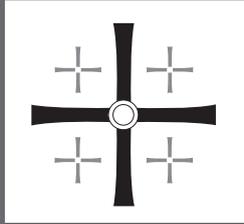
Specialising in delighted clients

Carpet, Rug, Upholstery & Leather Cleaning

01603 552062 | enquiries@cleanlivingnorfolk.co.uk

www.cleanlivingnorfolk.co.uk

Norfolk
Trusted Trader
Trading Standards Approved



FEBRUARY 2026

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Morning Worship at Caistor St Edmund at 9.30am

1st Feb **Praise & Worship**
 15th Feb **Holy Communion**

Morning Worship at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

1st, 15th Feb **Morning Worship** with children's group
 8th Feb **Morning Worship** with Holy Communion and children's group
 22nd Feb **More formal communion service**

Sunday afternoons in February

8th Feb **All invited** at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—
 Food, fun and faith for all ages
 22nd Feb **All Invited** at the Vicarage

Midweek gatherings in February

Every Wednesday at 8.30am

4 th February	7pm online	Morning Prayer at the Vicarage
5 th February	10am at the Church Hall	Prayer meeting
	Followed at 10.30am by	Holy Communion
18 th February	10am at Poringland Church	Coffee and Chat
19 th February	10.30am at the Church Hall	Ash Wednesday Service
25 th February	12pm at Framingham Earl Parish Church	Coffee and Chat
		Lent Lunch

Caistor church building is open about 10-4 daily - space to reflect, and to pray

Join us for Communion, coffee or Vintage Church on Thursday mornings — see above for all the times and dates

Sparklers

Craft, fun, singing and friendship for 0-4s and their parents, grandparents and carers.
 Email cathryn baker@gmail.com or find us on Facebook

embers

youth club
 Thursdays 7.30 - 9 pm
 Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall



Every week in school term—just drop in and join us

Sign up for email updates here

For all your DIY and gardening tasks

J's Maintenance Services

- ◆ Painting internally / externally
- ◆ Gutter clearing and repairs
- ◆ Fence repairs
- ◆ Roof repairs
- ◆ Door repairs
- ◆ Garden tidy

FULLY
INSURED

07746 375349
51najacques@gmail.com

Howsham Memorials East



Colour
Brochure
Available

No.1 for high quality and affordability

*Local independent memorial specialist
to Beccles & surrounding areas...*

11 Hungate, Beccles, NR34 9TT

01502 219300

howshameast@gmail.com

www.howshammemorials.co.uk

Stoke Holy Cross Ofsted: 254295 Charity: 1033659

High quality local childcare for 2 1/2 to 4 year olds

Pre-school

PLACES AVAILABLE

For this current school year and next

Contact us:
email: manager@shxpreschool.co.uk
tel: 07305 617153
www: shxpreschool.co.uk

The Pavilion, Long Lane, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8LY

made with PosterMyWall.com

HEARING CARE CENTRE

For quality of life, get quality hearing advice



We also provide a unique ENT nurse led wax removal service
**WAS £80
NOW £60**

Visit our expert team for professional advice on how we can improve your hearing

Book your free hearing assessment today by calling **01473 230 330**

We have clinics throughout Suffolk & Norfolk

hearingcarecentre.co.uk

FREE tiles from our tile range
with every full installation

COOPERS

Bathroom and Wetrooms Ltd

- En-suites
- Shower Rooms
- Bathrooms to Suit Your Needs
- Level Access Walk in Shower Rooms
- Kitchen Display
- Supply Only or Full Installation
- Tiling, Plastering, Electrics, Plumbing
- Small Building Work
- All Work Guaranteed
- Grant Work Undertaken
- Less Abled Wet Room

01603 400134

Open Monday - Friday 9am - 2pm
Saturday 10am - 2pm | Sunday CLOSED

Small
Kitchen
Display

Wet Room
Display in
Our Showroom

Independent
Family
Business



Visit our Showroom 1 Taverham Nursery Centre,
Fir Covert Road, Taverham, Norwich NR8 6HT
www.coopersbathroomsandwetrooms.co.uk



norwichsunblinds

**Buy 2
Get 1 Free**

On Our Handmade Blinds

Terms and conditions apply

01508 828010
www.norwichsunblinds.co.uk