

# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

MAY 2022



Signs of Spring  
from Liz Dack



Easter Crafts and  
Fun at the Park



Easter Celebrations at  
Dementia Cafe



EASTER  
SUNRISE SERVICE



OPEN GARDENS  
18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> June  
REMINDER



JOIN US FOR  
UKRAINE  
QUIZ NIGHT  
May 21<sup>st</sup>

ARMINGHALL, CAISTOR ST EDMUND, STOKE HOLY CROSS with DUNSTON

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Welcome then to May, normally a month of many bank holidays, although of course this year slightly fewer, given that the one at the end has been pushed into June as part of the Jubilee celebrations. There'll be more of that next month.

Mayday is an important one for me. My sister's birthday is on 1st May, and she made sure we remembered that, and now also my sister-in-law's. (She's not as bothered!) I lived in Oxford for a while, and over there May Day is big business, with choristers singing from the tower at 6am, Morris dancers everywhere, the pubs open at breakfast time, and students attempting to jump off the bridge into the river, if the police couldn't stop them.

Given this dangerous activity, it would hardly be surprising if that's how

Mayday became a distress call as well. It was certainly a dangerous day in Oxford. But I knew where it actually came from, because I remembered hearing about it on an old episode of the comedy *Red Dwarf*:

Mayday, mayday. I wonder why they call it "Mayday".

Eh?

The distress call. I wonder why it's "Mayday". It's only a bank holiday. Why not Shrove Tuesday or Ascension Sunday? Ascension Sunday, Ascension Sunday. 15th Wednesday after Pentecost, 15th Wednesday after Pentecost.

It's French, you *doink!* "M'aidez" - "Help me". "M'aidez"

Let's leave aside the question of whether a TV sitcom is the best place to learn French, and focus on the call itself: "Help me."

It's not always easy to ask for help. I particularly struggle with this when I am in a big shop looking for something. The quickest thing would be to ask someone, but for some reason I prefer to wander up and down the aisles for minutes on end, until I find it. I can get away with this if I am on my own, but not if I am with my family, because they think it is ridiculous. I mean, it is ridiculous.

It can feel like there is a lot to lose in asking for help. I'm admitting I can't do it all myself; that I am weak and imperfect and insufficient to the task. When I ask for help, I am making room for other people, but most of all I am making room for God.

The bible is full of people like you and me who make loads of mistakes, but the one thing most of them get right is asking God for help. They realise they can't help themselves, can't save themselves, often can't even make the right decision when it's staring them in the face, but they know to ask God for help.

That first May when I lived in Oxford was remarkable for all the Mayday shenanigans, but the real reason I remember it is that it was the first time I really asked God to help me, to save me, to forgive me. It was certainly not the last time, but it was the first, and I'll never forget it. With the fear of heights I've developed since then I can't imagine singing from a church tower, or jumping off a bridge, and I was never one for beer at breakfast time, but I'm not going to stop asking God for help. It changes everything.

Rob

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"

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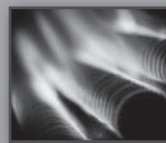
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# Weather / whether

Let's be typically British for a moment, may we think/talk about the weather. It's been unseasonably warm recently, and at the time of writing we've only had a few April showers. But as Spring turns to summer, and outside events are being planned, weather becomes a hot (excuse the pun) topic. We get a little more concerned that it might rain, that it might spoil the barbeque or the summer fair or the Jubilee street parties or the wedding. Why? Why are we so concerned? Will the weather really spoil the day or will it just make it more memorable? What should we be really talking about?

On the day I got married it was really windy, a lovely dry Spring day but windy. I didn't have a veil I had a hat and I had to constantly keep hold of it, except at one point the photographer wanted us to stand in front of the horses and cart we had. As the photos were being taken I became aware that one of the horses was very close to me, it was actually eating my hat because the wind had brought the material of my hat closer to the horse's mouth. It was memorable and we talk about it.

But if weather is a typical or topical subject for the British to talk about, there are some subjects that are considered taboo or to be avoided: politics, religion, finance. That's a shame because all three affect our lives always and at the moment, even more so. In politics May is the month of local elections across the UK, the month when some people will be elected for the first time to councils and when others will lose their seats, in Stoke Holy Cross a District Council by-election takes place – winners or losers will have to adjust to a new life. The beginning of May sees Muslims celebrating the end of Ramadan and on 26 May Christians celebrating Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated as king of the earth. May will also see the financial squeeze continuing as tax rises and energy hikes affect the money people have in their pockets. Whether or not you avoid those subjects, I think we would actually build a better society if we could talk about them. Not just in relation to another country, like Ukraine but our own. There is a way to talk about all three subjects, Jesus found a way and didn't avoid them so perhaps we can learn from him how to talk about them.

Jesus respected people – young/old, rich/poor, men/women. He knew they had their own thoughts/ views and he engaged people at their level. I love the story of Jesus talking to the woman at the well, he knows how she is living but did not condemn her rather he offered her new life, new hope (John chapter 4).

Jesus didn't avoid the difficult conversations or people – he approached them in the right attitude. As a servant - **the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28)

Jesus loved people – in spite of their differences, he loved them, had compassion on them and like any lover, wooed people to the lover of their souls. 'As the Father has loved me, **so have I loved you**. Now remain in my love. (John 15:9)

Whether you're concerned about the weather or not, Jesus is concerned about you and so am I. Maybe you want to talk about the taboo subjects mentioned above, I and others offer you the opportunity to do that by joining us for a coffee and chat on 19 May. There's also space to talk to just one of us about the subjects above, such as financial challenges you are facing or anticipate facing. Let's talk more than just the weather. Let's talk about what's really affecting us.

Lyn

# Sunrise Service at Caistor

Early on Easter morning some of us gathered at the Roman Town, near to Caistor St Edmund Church, to watch the sun rise. We looked around us and saw many signs of new life: the lambs, the new leaves on the trees, and birds flying to feed their young. We read the story of the disciples running to the tomb and finding it empty. And we sang: Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!

It was good to share this special moment together.

Afterwards, at the church, we had bacon and egg rolls for breakfast!  
A very good way to start the day!



# More signs of Spring

**Red Kites:** are a stunning looking bird in my opinion. There seems to be a few flying regularly around our villages at the moment. Maybe they are last years now looking to find a mate? Spring is definitely in the air!! Lots of the birds are checking out nest boxes and can be seen flying around with nesting material in their beaks. Spring is such a lovely time of the year. So many birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians all wanting to mate and bring new birth into the world.

**Tawny Owls:** We seem to have a few around Stoke, Caistor and Dunston. They are hard to spot but no mistaking their calls. Often you here the twit ta woo!! When out in the evenings or lying in bed at night if you are near woodland. These owls are nocturnal. They are often hidden by Ivy at the top of trees. If they have a good food source their young can be born early in the Springtime. These are the chicks in the cover photo.

**Liz Dack**

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**MAY**

5th: BYO Games @ SHX Church  
12th: Club Night plus Just Dance  
19th: Wide Games @ The Park  
25th: Club Night plus TRACKS

**JUNE**

2nd: Half Term  
9th: Club Night plus Crafts  
16th: Water Fight @ The Park  
23rd: Club Night plus TRACKS  
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## SPRING QUIZ - MAY 21<sup>ST</sup> 7.30

**in Stoke Church Hall  
and online via Zoom**

### ALL PROCEEDS TO HELP UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Please get your thinking caps on and come and join us in the Stoke Holy Cross spring quiz at the Church Hall in the centre of the village at 7:30 pm on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May. Tables or teams of 6 or 8 people (recommended donation £5 per person).

Please contact Andy Harding by email at [andy@hardings.uk](mailto:andy@hardings.uk). To enable participation of extended families and or friends it will also be possible for complete tables to participate online. We will also hold a cake sale during the quiz and welcome any offers of scrumptious cakes to sell!

# St George's Hall Dementia Support Cafe



On the second and fourth Monday of each month except bank holidays this is a great place to relax for those with dementia and for their carers. Come along and join us for fun activities and refreshments.



On April 11<sup>th</sup> an enjoyable time was had making Easter cards and we had a lovely Easter display.

There is always room for people living with dementia and their partners or carers to join us, whether on our subsidised outings or at our regular Café sessions from 10am to 12 noon in St. George's hall at Upper Stoke Holy Cross. Referral not necessary.

Our dates for next month are 9<sup>th</sup> May when we have the Squee Gees Musical Duo to entertain us and 23<sup>rd</sup> May will be a Jubilee theme.

For more information ring 01508494742, 01508493661 or 01508495580  
Our website is [st.george's-dementia-support-group.org](http://st.george's-dementia-support-group.org)

STOKE HOLY CROSS

# Picnic in the Park

JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Saturday 4th June  
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PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022

 Dunston services coming soon



We're really pleased to invite you to join us to worship at Dunston once again this Spring. The Ascension Day service at least will certainly be in the churchyard, so please bring a chair if possible, and be prepared for all weathers!

**26th May** Ascension Day service at 10am  
**31st May** at 5pm praying especially for Dunston as part of Thy Kingdom Come week  
**19th June** Evening Prayer at 5pm

Save the date! We'll be having more services at Dunston at 10am on 9th, 11th and 13th August.

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# Open Gardens Weekend

We hope you are looking forward to the

## Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston Open Gardens weekend 2022

**June 18th and 19th  
from 12noon – 5pm**



There will be 17 gardens to visit including the allotments  
Both Stoke and Dunston churches and the churchyards will be open  
Plus there will be live music and displays at Stoke.

Refreshments will be available at the church hall.

If anyone would like to help by making cakes or helping on the day please get in touch with  
Lyn Marsh or Anna Lipp.

lyn@venta-group.org   anna@lipp.org.uk

This year the village open gardens weekend will be raising money for the  
Church buildings fund and the St George's Hall Dementia Café.

## TUESDAY GROUP NOTES FOR MAY, 2022

Our members have not met for a very long time, and we hope that with the onset of better weather it will be possible to see each other again. We still have a substantial donation to pay to 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf', and look forward to the Charity's representative coming to Stoke to receive the funds. The date is yet to be arranged.

Earlier in the spring, we were saddened to lose yet another long-standing member of our Group when Liz Stockings died. She had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and we cannot mourn in such circumstances, but we can be ever grateful for the help that she gave, always cheerfully, on many occasions and in many ways. Liz was a fine flower arranger, and as always in our Group, her talent was used to good effect. We send our condolences to her two sons.

## Friday in the Park

It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon on Good Friday, and lots of families came to join us for Fun at the Park. After two Easters of Covid restrictions, it was fantastic to be able to open up the Pavilion for cakes, drinks and activities, and meet lots of people! We thought about the Easter story with an egg hunt trail around the park, made Easter cards and planted cress seeds in egg-shells. If your cress has grown, why not share a photo on our Facebook page so we can all see how it looks?



We also used bright-coloured chalks to cover a black paper cross on the wall, to remember that Jesus can bring light and hope into the darkest times and places. We drew pictures of our friends as we thought about how grateful we are for them, and how important it is to share our lives with each other. It was a lovely start to the Easter weekend, and great to meet so many of you there.

More events for families will be coming up soon, so keep an eye on the village and church Facebook pages for details, or contact us on rob@venta-group.org to find out more.



## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club for the over 55's meets at St. Georges Hall  
Upper Stoke Holy Cross the first  
Thursday each month

May Club Meeting cancelled -  
needed for Election

Bingo for May will be Thursday 12th and  
Thursday 26th - eyes down at 1.30pm  
Bowls for May will be Wednesday 4th and  
Thursday 19th at 1.30pm £2.00

Our next outing will be to Bury St.  
Edmunds on Wednesday 15th May  
If you would like to join us on this trip,  
and support our Club,  
you would be very welcome.

Ring Carol on 01508 492132  
or Liz on 01508 493245

## New Beginnings

Where snowdrops once laid a white carpet

Time now for new beginnings, banks of daffodils and fields of daisies.

Other shoots, of plants, as yet unidentified begin to show

The lukewarm sunshine and soft damp earth encouraging them to push up and make themselves known.

Bees the first pollinators, buzzing around the violets.

Farmers turning over soil, ready for this year's rapeseed and linseed crop.

Long tailed tits busy building a perfectly formed nest.

A cosy moss lining and an outer covering of lichen.

Nature at its busiest!!!

Pauline Montgomery





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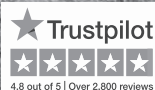
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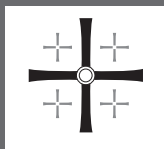
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# MAY 2022

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## Special services this month!

26th May  
31st May  
2nd June

10am in Dunston churchyard  
5pm at Dunston  
10am at Arminghall

Ascension Day Service  
Prayer for Dunston  
Morning Prayer

## Tuesday-Saturday mornings (except 26th May, 2nd June)

9am Tues-Fri zoom.us/j/385426921  
10am Sat Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921

Prayer meeting  
with Bible reading

## 9.30am Caistor St Edmund services this month

Sunday 1st May  
Sunday 15th May

Praise & Worship  
Holy Communion

*And don't forget that Caistor church building is open about 10-4 most days -  
space to reflect, and to pray*

## Every week at Stoke Holy Cross

10.30am

Morning Worship with children's group  
(with Holy Communion on 1 & 15 May)

## Sparklers

Craft, fun, singing and friendship for 0-4s  
and their parents, grandparents and  
carers. Every Tuesday morning in school  
term from 10-11 at Stoke Church Hall

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Thursdays 7.30 - 9 pm  
Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall

Every week in school term



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## Big Ukraine quiz

Saturday 21st May  
All proceeds to Ukraine charities  
In-person and online teams welcome  
Suggested donation of £5 per person  
online, £6 each in-person including  
wine and snacks  
Maximum of 6 per team  
Plenty of things to win on the night

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S	E	R	G	K	L	D	E	S	S	N	Y	S	M
H	V	S	N	A	A	C	L	L	P	M	T	U	A
I	A	I	T	S	R	S	R	D	E	S	P	R	Z
P	E	S	O	D	U	D	C	R	N	P	M	R	E
B	H	Y	M	S	O	R	E	E	C	Y	E	E	D
R	K	H	E	E	P	U	T	N	N	N	N	C	M
S	B	J	A	P	S	H	B	H	E	S	P	T	N
H	B	M	R	O	B	S	O	T	S	R	I	I	O
K	N	R	O	B	R	A	I	L	I	Y	S	O	C
H	D	I	W	T	H	O	M	A	S	N	U	N	N
E	R	A	B	B	O	N	I	S	H	T	G	S	O

## Easter & Beyond

MESSIAH

WORSHIP

GARDENER

EMPTY

SKY

HEAVEN

ASCENSION

RISEN

BELIEVE

MARY

THOMAS

DISCIPLES

AMAZED

JESUS

TOMB

DOUBTING

RESURRECTION

RABBONI





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# NOT FOR PROFIT LAW

Community Interest Company

**Not for Profit Law** is a social enterprise founded by two local solicitors, **Laura van Ree** and **Trina Worden**, who have more than 30 years' experience between them. Prompted by their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, **Laura** and **Trina** have resolved to 'do law differently'. Through **Not for Profit Law** they offer expert legal advice at lower rates than traditional law firms, partnering with **Norfolk Community Foundation** to feed the profits they make back into the local community.

## FREE WILL REVIEW

Changes in the law and tax system can mean that a will made just a few years ago might not perform as you expect. Laura and Trina will happily look at your will and make suggestions about potential changes that might benefit you. It may be that you don't need to do anything, but it is certainly worth checking!



## FREE PROBATE ADVICE

There can be a lot to think about when someone dies, at what is almost certainly an emotional time. For that reason, Laura and Trina offer a free initial probate advice service to anyone who has lost a loved one or is dealing with an estate.



Also advising on **Powers of Attorney**, **Court of Protection** and **Trusts**.

We aim to be flexible, offering meetings online, in offices in Norwich or at your home. Evening and weekend appointments are available on request.



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