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JANUARY 2026

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Welcome

Happy New Year and welcome to the January issue of the Wensum Advertiser. We hope you all had a lovely Christmas & New Year celebrations with family and friends. We're ready to start the new year with a bang here at Wensum HQ with lots of exciting things coming up to make 2026

one to remember. Our sister magazine the 'Heart of Norfolk Advertiser' is being delivered to 12,000 homes and businesses around the Dereham, Toftwood & Scarning area. To find out more head to www.heartofnorfolk.co.uk.

We continue to receive great feedback from advertisers and readers alike – do get in touch if there is anything in

particular you would like to see within these pages! We'd love to hear from you.

Remember we offer a 10% discount on adverts when you sign up for a minimum of three issues. These don't have to be three consecutive issues. For example, you could advertise February, April and June. Get in touch for more information. Enjoy this month's issue!



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Local History Corner

In the 1980s, just forty years ago, making a telephone call was not as straightforward as it is today, and the telephone exchange was essential for routing calls and connecting subscribers. As the service gradually changed to an automatic digital system the old telephone exchanges and the personal service provided by the telephone operators became redundant.

Our photo shows the closure of Fakenham's telephone exchange in February 1983 and the huge number of people who were essential to run it. Those shown here include Keith Studd, Michael Cook, Gillian Cook, Linda Amos, Gerald Durrant, Irene Bunkle, Sheila Massingham, Alan Edge, Doug Sheekie and Mr. Stuffins.

Do you have any photos or memories you'd like to share of life at that time, either in Fakenham or the nearby villages? If so, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact Fakenham Community Archive on 01328 863377 or email us via the 'contact' section of our website: www.fakenhamcommunityarchive.weebly.com

We hold a public session in



Photo kindly donated by Zena Haws

Fakenham Parish Church on the last Tuesday of every month, when you can bring in photos to be scanned and added to our records of local life, also look through the whole digital archive on our laptops. Our next public session will be in the church on Tuesday 27th January between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm.

This is a very sociable afternoon,

where you can learn a lot about the history of our town and surrounding villages. A voluntary donation of £3 includes refreshments and helps to cover our expenses.

Chris Chalk

*Secretary, Fakenham & District
Community Archive*

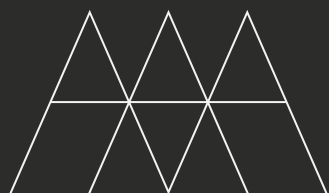
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Happy New Year from Fakenham Library

As we start the new year, it's a time to look ahead and to consider new and positive approaches to our lives. Maybe you are new to Fakenham, or you may have more time on your hands than you used to? Maybe your circumstances have changed, and you find yourself in need of a little extra support? Or perhaps your new year's resolution is to get out and about more or to try new things?

Fakenham library can help you with all these, and with so much more. Our wonderful library isn't simply filled with nothing but books; we have all sorts of things on offer here too. You can browse and borrow books, of course, but also audio books and ebooks. There are baby weighing facilities and there's free access to computers and wifi too. Lots of groups meet here regularly and

we have so many things on offer. The majority of our groups are free, though some of them have a small charge, and for most of them, you don't even need to book in advance. There's lots going on for children and families, which will keep your little ones occupied through those long gloomy January days.

In addition to our regular groups, there are lots of exciting events coming up. Keep an eye on the library social media, or check out our article in the Wensum Advertiser every month to make sure you don't miss out.

Make this year the year you try something new at Fakenham Library!

What's on in the Library in January

- **Family Fun Saturdays:** 10.00am, 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st January
- **Digital Support:** 10.30am, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th January (Booking essential)

- **Just a Cuppa:** 11.30am, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th January
- **Board Games for Adults:** 1.00pm, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th January
- **Craft and Chat:** 10.30am, 6th January
- **Lego Club:** 3.30pm, 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th January
- **Bounce and Rhyme, Stay and Play:** 2.00pm, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th January
- **Children's Craft Time:** 3.30pm, 12th, 18th, 26th January
- **Library Book Group:** 10.30am, 13th January
- **Watercolours with Diane Griffiths:** 1.00pm, 13th January (small charge)
- **Audio Book Club:** 12.00pm, 19th January
- **Creative Writing with David Redfield:** 10.00am, 20th January (small charge, please speak to library staff)

Active Fakenham unveils report following a landmark year of festivals, volunteers and community engagement

Active Fakenham has published its 2025 Annual Report and a new short video, highlighting a year of exceptional participation, creativity, and community spirit across Fakenham and the surrounding area. Both are available on the Active Fakenham website

Despite operating with **no paid staff and no core funding**, the organisation delivered a wide programme of low-cost, inclusive events enjoyed by thousands of residents and visitors.

This year's achievements further cement Active Fakenham's reputation as one of the region's most dynamic and community-driven organisations.

Five major festivals and more than 200 volunteers

In 2025, Active Fakenham organised five flagship festivals:

- **Fakenham Arts Festival**
- **Fakenham Film Festival**
- **Easter Sunday Runday – Festival of Running**
- **Festival of Two Wheels – Ride North Norfolk**
- **Riverside Festival**, featuring the

popular duck and cardboard raft races

These events brought together more than **200 volunteers**, over **60 venues**, and hundreds of local businesses, artists, families and visitors from across North Norfolk and further afield.

Record digital reach

Active Fakenham's digital and social media presence reached new heights in 2025:

- **127,000+ views** in a single month across Facebook, Instagram and the website
- **6,700+ members** in the rapidly growing Love Fakenham Facebook group
- **839,000+ lifetime views** across Flickr and YouTube.

These platforms now serve as key tools for local information, event promotion and year-round community connection. A new monthly e-newsletter will be launched in 2026 to build on this momentum.

Supporting local groups and promoting wellbeing

Alongside its major festivals, Active Fakenham delivered and supported a wide range of community and wellbeing initiatives, including:

- Free or low-cost yoga and Pilates sessions
- Equipment loans (gazebos, barriers, giant ducks, signage)
- Town maps, river walk guides, and other local resources
- The official Fakenham Town Guide
- Mentoring and supporting local voluntary groups
- Close collaboration with schools, charities and community organisations

Richard Crook said:

"We are hugely grateful to all our funders, sponsors and especially our volunteers. Their generosity enables us to deliver professional-quality events on a shoestring budget. We are now seeking further support for our 2026 programme."

Looking ahead to 2026

- Continuing all five major annual festivals
- Launching the new monthly e-newsletter, **The Community Connection**
- Expanding inclusive wellbeing events
- Strengthening partnerships and volunteer recruitment
- Growing digital reach and community engagement

Active Fakenham is currently seeking new **sponsors and volunteers** for its 2026 programme.

Press Release

Greenhoe Local Energy Club

Do you want to save up to 25% on your household electricity bill?

You can join a growing number of people who want to take action on green issues by using locally generated renewable electricity available to all households served by the UKPN's Egmore substation, which includes those in Walsingham, Wells, Warham, Stiffkey, and Wighton.

Come one of our meetings at Wighton Village Hall on Thursday 29th January 2026, either 2pm or 7pm. Hot drinks will be provided on arrival.

Cannot make it? Email greenhoe100@gmail.com or send a friend.

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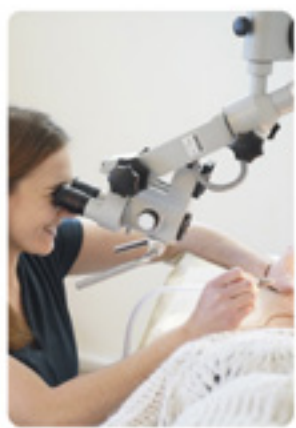
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WHAT'S ON NEAR YOU

Fakenham & District Community Archive

Are you interested in seeing how people round here used to live?

Come and look through old photos and scrapbooks of Fakenham and nearby villages. Everybody welcome!

Our next public session is in Fakenham Parish Church on Tuesday 27th January 2026.

£3.00 - refreshments included.

Fakenham Choral Society

Do you enjoy singing? Are you a tenor or bass?

If you enjoy singing, why not join Fakenham Choral Society.

The Society is looking to recruit more tenors and basses for the coming season. We'll be starting rehearsals for our Spring Concert on Tuesday 6 January.

We are one of the county's most highly regarded choirs and we aim to bring the pleasure of live, large-scale choral music choral music-making to a wide public.

The Choir performs a minimum of three concerts a year and our repertoire has featured a broad range of both sacred and secular music performed with a succession of distinguished soloists and orchestras.

We meet in Fakenham to rehearse on Tuesday evenings from September to June.

For details of how to join, see here:

<https://www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org/join-us>.

Fakenham Society

8th January 2026 "A talk with James Stewart" Greg Powles appearing in character, Greg gives his talk as James Stewart about his life, films and wartime experience.

22nd January 2026 "The Magnificent Seven" Jim Stebbings gives a talk about The music, lives and stories of the American songwriters largely responsible for the "American Songbook" inc. Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers and illustrated with musical extracts.

Stanhoe & Barwick W.I.

Stanhoe and Barwick Women's Institute - first Thursday of each month 2pm at Stanhoe Reading Rooms.

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Here at Stanhoe and Barwick W.I - whether you are into crafts, cookery or even campaigning, whether you're looking for friendship, fun or fascinating speakers, we have all that and so much more.

Our next few meetings include:

- January 8th: Medical detection dogs.
- February 5th: King's Lynn Night Shelter
- March 5th: History of the Control Tower, Sculthorpe

Why not come along and see for yourself - visitors always welcome.

Contact: stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com for more details.

Hempton Memorial Hall Indoor Car Boot Sale

Sunday 25th January 9am to 12 noon.

Free Parking, Free Entry, Dogs welcome.

Refreshments. Fundraising for the upkeep of the hall.

Booking essential. Tables £10 (provided).

Call 07532 690 758 to book or for more information.

Screen-next-the-Sea

12th January 7pm "Roofman" (15) Wells Maltings

26th January 7pm "Sorry, Baby" (15) Wells Maltings

Tickets are available online www.wells-maltings.org.uk, by phone 01328719885 or in person from the Visitor Centre at the Maltings.

The Wensum Dementia Cafe

A warm welcome awaits you at Fakenham Cricket Club, in Field Lane every Friday from 10am until noon.

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For further details call Sharon 07827603415

Fakenham Men's Probus

For retired, semi-retired or near retirement men. We meet monthly at The Gallow on the racecourse Fakenham to socialise, listen to interesting talks and enjoy a drink and a two-course lunch together.

- Monday 12th January, we have a talk by Dave Sobczak on the Magistrate's Court
- Monday 9th February, we have a talk by Helen Burnnett on "Confessions of a Mystery Shopper"

Membership £20pa + lunch. Free "Try before you join". For information contact: info@fakenhamprobus.org.uk, 01328-887466 or visit www.fakenhamprobus.org.uk

The Arts Society Glaven Valley-Cley Village Hall

The Arts Society Glaven Valley meets at Cley Village Hall for lectures on arts related subjects, once a month on the third Tuesday, at 2.15. Parking available at the Hall. New members are welcomed, and you can find out how to join on our website www.theartssocietyglavenvalley.org.uk

If you wish to come along as a visitor to sample a lecture, please email the Secretary at tasgvsecretary@gmail.com

Next meeting - Tuesday 20 January 2026 **A Village in Heaven: Stanley Spencer's Cookham** by Amy Lim. This lecture will look at Cookham's place in Spencer's art, and how it was central to his unique vision of English domestic and spiritual life.

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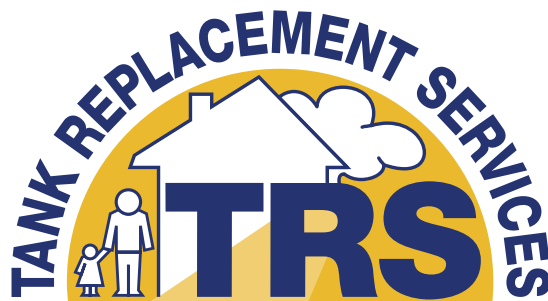
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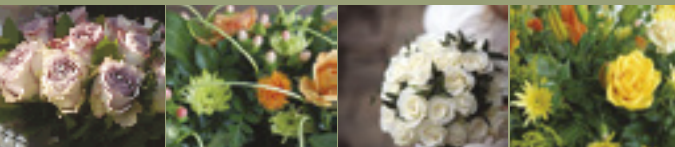
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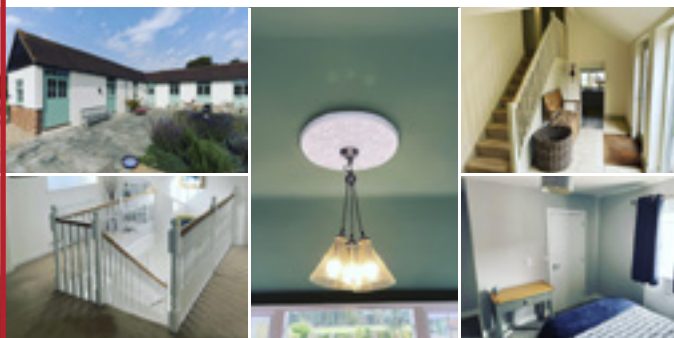
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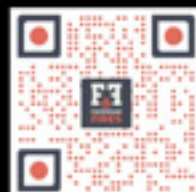


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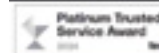
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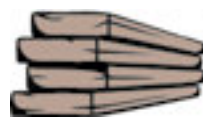
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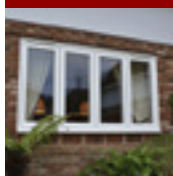


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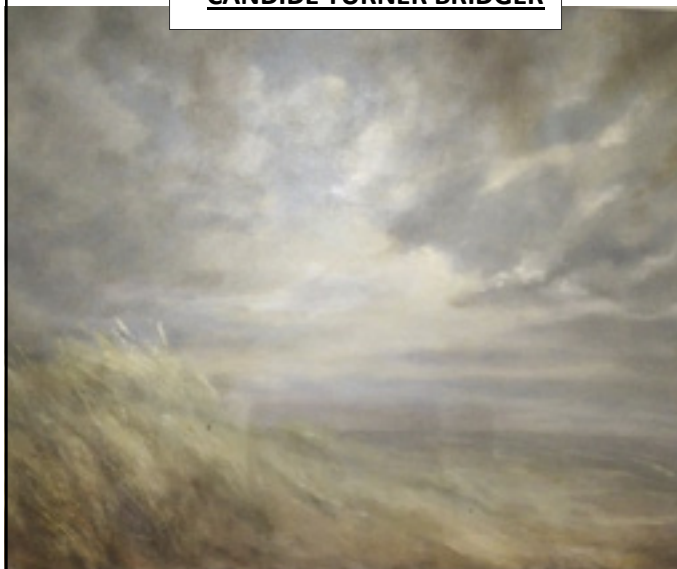
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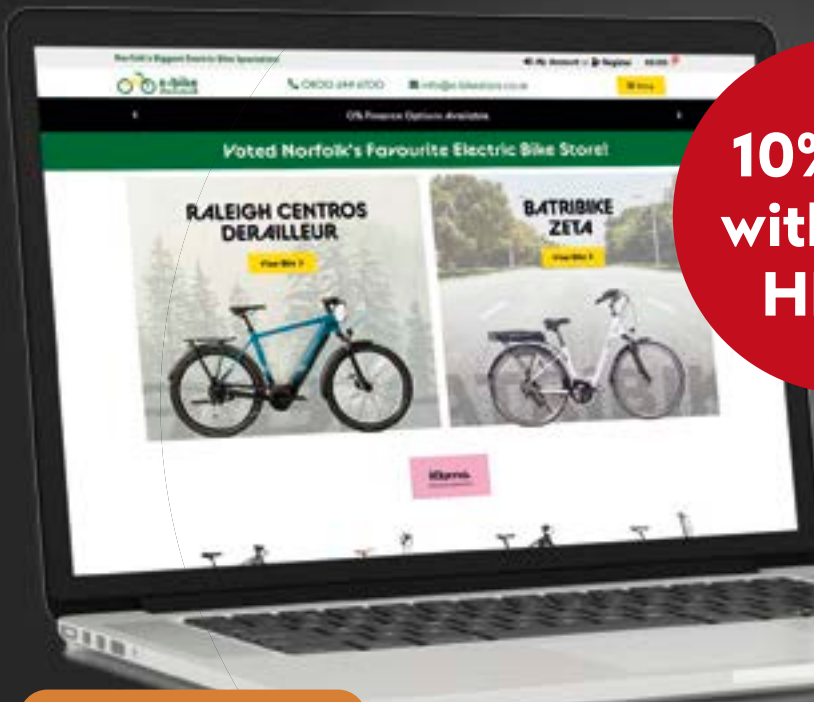
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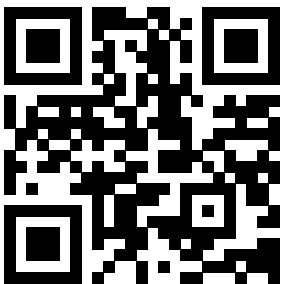


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