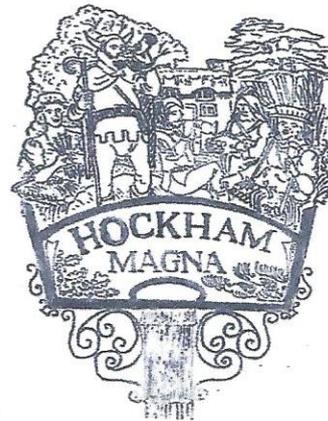


IN-TOUCH

Great Hockham News Sheet

Issue No 570
March 2026



Editorial

The snowdrops in Hockham churchyard have again been wonderful to see - they seem to multiply each year. It's just a pity they didn't have more sunshine to really look their best, but well worth a visit even so. We are told that the path through the churchyard, now covered in coarse gravel, is soon to be resurfaced with fine gravel to facilitate better access to the church for people with walking difficulties, wheelchairs, baby buggies etc. A turning circle for vehicles is also planned near the church porch.

Notable dates in March: St David's day on the 1st, Mothering Sunday (Mothers' Day) on the 15th, St Patrick's Day on the 17th, Lady Day on the 25th and British Summer Time begins on Sunday the 29th. There is an old saying that if Good Friday or Easter Sunday falls on Lady Day, there will be a national disaster within a year. So we should be all right this year!



This month we will be having a **SEED AND PLANT SWAP**



Fancy baking some cakes or anything else? Contact Tamia on 07774 842388 to find out how you can help



Need a lift? Bev Plummer is happy to organise. Call her on 07741 270204 or 01953 498243



**Coffee
Cake
Chat**

Friendly Faces
Yummy Bakes

21 March
Village Hall
10.30am to 12 noon

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Wednesday... to Watton
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The Wayland Group of Parishes

*Breckles, Caston, Great Hockham, Griston, Stow Bedon and Thompson
In the Church of England Diocese of Norwich*

Worship in the Wayland Group of Churches

March 2026

Sunday 1st March

10.30am Service of the Word
Holy Cross, Caston
with Hymns for St. David's Day

Sunday 8th March

10.30am United Holy Communion
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

Sunday 15th March

10.30am United Holy Communion
St Peter & St Paul, Griston

Sunday 22nd March

10.30am Family Worship
St Botolph's, Stow Bedon

Sunday 29th March Palm Sunday

10.30am United Holy Communion
St Martin's, Thompson

Monday 30th March

6.00pm Compline
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

Tuesday 31st March

6.00pm Compline
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

Wednesday 1st April

6.00pm Compline
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

Friday 3rd April Good Friday

10.00am – 3.00pm
The Wayland Churches will be open for private
prayer & reflection

Sunday 5th April Easter Day

10.30am United Holy Communion
St Margaret's, Breckles

“Spring is in the air.....”

Did you know that the first day of Spring almost always coincides with the International Day of Happiness (March 20th)? This intentional pairing



was established because Spring brings a period of increased sunlight and warmth that lifts the mood of many, bringing hope, renewal, and new beginnings.

The founder of the International Day of Happiness, Jayme Illien, championed the idea that the equinox brings opportunity for a fresh start for humankind, marking it as a perfect time for focusing on happiness as a global human goal.

It is true that the Spring Equinox brings happiness to many. The winter chill still clings to the air, but looking out of the window a different story is unfolding. The snowdrops have appeared, followed by the cheerful, bold yellow of the early daffodils and the soft purple hues of crocuses. Spring is, without a doubt, on its way.

It is easy, in the dark months of January and February, to feel as though the cold will last forever. Yet, nature teaches us the profound lesson of patience and resurrection. Beneath the frosty, brown soil, life has been preparing to burst forth. Those delicate green shoots are a sure reminder that winter is not the end of the story.

In the Bible, spring flowers and the renewal of the earth are powerful metaphors for the hope we find in Christ. Just as the earth brings forth beauty from a barren state, we too are offered a time of renewal. The Song of Solomon reminds us: *"...for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time for singing has come..."* (Song of Solomon 2:11-12).

As the days grow longer and the flowers brighter, may you find joy and new life in this beautiful season.

With every blessing Vanessa x

Reverend Vanessa is the rector for the Wayland parishes of Breckles, Caston, Great Hockham, Griston, Thompson, and Stow Bedon. She is available for baptisms, weddings, funerals and pastoral visiting.

You can contact her on 07984 318885 or by email at vanessadlayfield@gmail.com

THE EAGLE

Harling Rd, Great Hockham, Thetford IP24 1NP
01953 498893

Dates for your Diary:

3rd March

Book Club 7.30pm

4th & 18th March

Bingo arrival for 7.45pm 18+
(Please book a table)

11th & 25th March

Quiz Night 8pm start

(Call to book a table, max 6 per team)

15th March 12-4pm

Mother's Day Roast Dinner
(Please call to book a table)

Food trucks start 2nd April

With Hoggies Hog Roast 5-8pm

Good Friday 3rd April

Fish and Chips served 12-8.30pm

Easter Saturday 4th April

Food Served 12-8.30pm

Easter Sunday 5th April

Food Served 12-3pm

Bank Holiday Monday 6th April

Food Served 12-3pm

Ladies Darts still meet every Tuesday night and are always looking for more ladies looking to try it out. No pressure to be a superstar, it's just a fun night with lots of giggles!

Crib is every Wednesday lunchtime 12.30-3pm (only £1 to play) except for the last

Wednesday of the month which is Whist 1-3pm (also £1 to play)

Opening Hours

Monday – Thursday 12-2.30pm/6-11pm

Friday – Saturday 12-11pm

Sunday 12-10.30pm

Food Available

Fish and Chip Fryday: 12-8.30pm

(Takeaway and eat in)

Saturday: 12-8.30pm

Sunday: 12-3pm

Exploring Drawing From charcoal to collage

Join award winning artist
Melodie Cook for
twice monthly workshops

Great Hockham Village Hall, Harling Road, IP24 1NT

Tuesday Workshops March 10th & 24th

10am -1pm

£20 per session. All materials supplied

Call melodie on 07531 875713

Email: melcookartist@icloud.com

Instagram @exploringdrawing

Facebook Melodie Cook Artist

In-Touch Team

We would like to welcome Mike and Lisa Hawkins, who have recently moved to the village, to the In-Touch team.

Their offer to assist in the production of the newsletter is much appreciated and we are delighted that they have decided to join us.

Please use the village bottle bank



Mobile Library Service

CHESTNUT SQUARE 10:55 – 11:10
SCOTGATE CLOSE 11:15 – 11:35

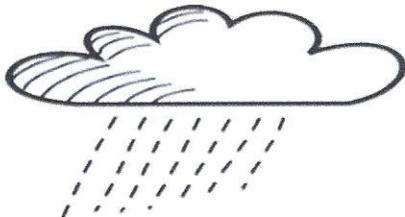
Date of forthcoming visits (Thursdays):

26 March / 23 April / 21 May /
18 June / 16 July / 13 August /
10 Sept / 8 Oct / 5 Nov / 3 Dec



January Rainfall

January 2026		67.0 mm
January 2025		26.4 mm
Highest Jan since 1979	1988	113.5 mm
Lowest Jan since 1979	1997	8.5 mm



Defibrillator

The defibrillator is located in the telephone box
by the Village Green.

Press the button to the right of the unit to
connect to the emergency services who will give
the code to unlock the cabinet.

School Birthdays



“Happy Birthday” to Cody, Grayson H, Lola,
Jonah and Harry.

George Stoneman

Earlier this year we lost a character in the village. George moved to Hockham in the 1970s, and he and his wife Eileen soon got involved in village life. Amongst other things, they helped run some of the youth groups that abounded in the village at that time. They had two children of their own, Deborah and David, who also played their part in village life. Sadly, David died at a very young age. George and Eileen also took part in the village variety shows held in the Edinburgh Hall. Unfortunately their marriage finished, but George continued to help in the Eagle pub where he met Angie, who eventually became his partner of almost 30 years. Together they helped serve in, and clean, the pub, even running it when the licensees had a holiday. They also cleaned the village hall which Angie still does to this day. George also took over the running of bars in the hall, or for outside events.

George worked as a sales rep, selling welding gear, a job he was well equipped for, with his banter and joke telling. He loved playing practical jokes, from which most people in the village will have suffered at some point. He was a kind, generous man, who brightened the lives of everyone he came into contact with.

He will be sadly missed in the village. RIP George.

Geoff Stuart

SAVE THE DATE

Back by popular request and following on
from our Italian, Beaujolais, Mexican, 60s
& 70s and Medieval themed evenings,
Hockham Church will be the venue for a

MIDSUMMER MASQUERADE BALL

on **SATURDAY 27th JUNE**

More details to follow in the April edition
of In Touch

Don't forget to **SAVE THE DATE**

GREAT HOCKHAM GARDENING CLUB

WILLOW WEAVING WORKSHOP

with Jane Kelly

Saturday March 28th 9.30am - 1.00pm



**Come and join us at the Edinburgh Hall
for a morning of**

**Willow Weaving with Jane Kelly
make your own bird feeder for £40, or
plant frame for £50**

**All materials and tuition, along with
refreshments is covered in the cost.**

**Contact Karen to book a place at
karenemiller63@gmail.com**

Only 10 places available, so book early....

**It should be a fun session with a great take-
home-and-use result**

Great Hockham Carpet Bowls

The Carpet Bowls Club meets every Tuesday evening at 7pm - 9pm in the Village Hall either for matches in the Spring and Autumn and / or for practice games between ourselves.

For more information - Tel 07737 046121

Robin



Great Hockham Gardening Club



Wednesday 11th March

Chris Davey, Seagate Nurseries

Growing Irises

Membership fees are £10 per annum

Indoor meetings are held in the Edinburgh Hall, Harling Road, Great Hockham, IP24 1NT on the second Wednesday of the month

Doors open 1.30 pm / Speakers start at 2 pm

Indoor meetings free to members / £3 to visitors

Outdoor visits are subsidised by the club but members may have to pay a small contribution for some visits

Secretary: Stacey Smith

secretaryghgc@gmail.com

Website: greathockhamgardeningclub.org.uk

Book Sale – Caston Village Hall

There will be a Grand Second Hand Book Sale at **Caston Village Hall** on **Saturday 25th April 10am-4pm.**

Thousands of books, all genres and books costing from 25p-£1.25. Hosted by Caroline and Keith from Bookworm Book Sales, renowned for selling a good quality mix of books at bargain prices.

Refreshments are available including bacon rolls, cheese scones, sausage rolls and a selection of yummy cakes. Why not come along for lunch and enjoy a tasty jacket potato? Put the date in your diary and see you there.

Lynsey Doughty

The content of the articles in In-Touch is the responsibility of the named contributors, not the Newsletter Committee. Anonymous items will not be accepted.

Little Hockham Lane History

Originally called Warren Lane, because the road led to the old warren, on the left as you go down the lane. Across the fields was also one of the village windmills and is mentioned in several medieval documents. Its name of Mill Field gives the game away.

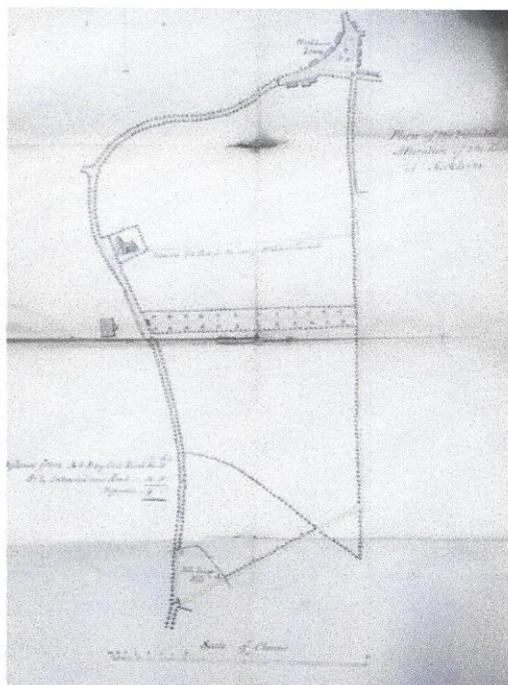
Whereas there was likely a small track that led to Little Hockham, it became an official road in 1790 when a road order was made. In reality, the road order was to stop people using Churchbridge Lane, which went past the church, in front of the hall and beyond, to a bridge which led to Little Hockham. The then Lord of the Manor wanted to increase the size of the park of the hall so the proposal, which apparently was a shorter route, had other reasons as to why it was requested and approved.

As you get to the forested area, a public footpath goes off to the left. This was the coach road and was one of the access points to Hockham Hall, from the Roundhouse across the fields to the lane and beyond. The vista when you got to LHL would have been to impress visiting guests.

The devils pit sits aside the lane and the hill heading to Little Hockham is locally known as Paynes Hill. A Mr Payne did indeed live at Little Hockham at one time.

The woodland that's beside that hill, is known as Hills and Holes and contains many species of flora and fauna including 24 species of dragonfly of the 50 in the UK. In Hills and Holes is a tree known affectionately as the Great Oak. At the last count it took 6 people with arms outstretched to measure the circumference. It's likely 500 years plus old.

The field to the left as you go past the wood and head to Little Hockham Farm, is known as Kings Croft and again a wealthy gentleman called Kinge, used to live at the hall, many years ago. Little Hockham Hall, which is private property, has a Victorian facade over a part Elizabethan interior.



Road Order Map 1790

Chris Garrod

Village Hall Bookings March 2026

Regular Bookings

Monday	Reserved for Parish Council	Evening
Tuesday	Carpet Bowls	Evening
Wednesday	Yoga	6.00-7.30pm
Thursday	Taekwondo	6.00-8.00pm

March 2026

Sat 7 th	Sound Bath	PM
Tues 10 th	Exploring Drawing	10am-1pm
Wed 11 th	Gardening Club	PM
Mon 16 th	Parish Council	7.30pm
Sat 21 st	Coffee Cake & Chat	AM
Tues 24 th	Exploring Drawing	10am-1pm

Dog training Monday and Friday evenings (earlier on Parish Council days).

For Yoga information ring June on 07766 108075

For Taekwondo contact Dave Robb 01953 882848 or 07710 666133

For Sound Bath contact Tracey Mathison 07748 213397

For Hall bookings contact Chris Garrod 07770 710307 or e-mail chris@oaklands4.co.uk.

THOMPSON & GRISTON SECONDHAND BOOK FAIR



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March 14th 2026

10.00-15.30

(refreshments close at 15.00)

Thompson Community Hall

School Road IP24 1PY



Cakes and bakes
Chocolate tombola
Plants and bulbs



Next book sales July 18th & November 21st

Proceeds to benefit Griston Church, Thompson Church and Thompson Community Hall



At the Book Club meeting on 3rd February Karen's questions on Barbara Kingsolver's 'Demon Copperhead' generated some lively discussion among the 7 attendees despite the 652 page novel not being to everyone's taste.

The input from our two new members who had luckily already read and enjoyed the book was most welcome, and the meeting awarded Demon Copperhead an overall rating of 8/10. This harrowing yet ultimately uplifting fictional story of an orphan growing up in harsh circumstances was based on the Charles Dickens's novel 'David Copperfield' but relocated to modern day USA. Our enthusiasm was sparked to revisit Charles Dickens's classic tale, one perhaps to look out for at the forthcoming Thompson Book Fair on 14th March.

Hockham Book Club next meets on Tuesday 3rd March when 'The Year of Sitting Dangerously' by Simon Barnes will be the book under discussion. If this quirky-sounding wildlife journal (set in his Norfolk garden) appeals to you we would like to invite you to join us on 3rd March at 7.30pm in The Eagle where a warm welcome awaits.

And in the meantime, happy reading.

Bev Plummer



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We would love to enlarge our membership.

Please contact: Jane Dalton (Secretary)
Mobile: 07557517064

Email: jane.dalton@btinternet.com
... for more details or for a lift to meetings.

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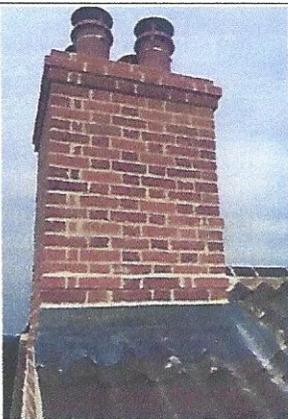
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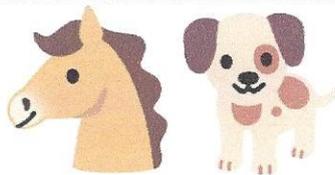
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MINUTES OF A HOCKHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY 10TH
FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.30 PM IN HOCKHAM VILLAGE HALL

Attending: Cllrs Bennett, Lambert, Thomas, Leech, Lloyd and Loft, County Councillor F Eagle and Ward member P Cowen, plus 10 members of the public.

- 1) **Apologies for absence.** Cllr Wiltshire
- 2) **Declarations of Interest.** Cllrs Bennett and Loft as Allotment holders, Cllr Leech as a farmer from Little Hockham and Cllr Lambert as landlord of the Eagle and trustee of the Woodford Charity.
- 3) **Requests for Dispensation.** None
- 4) **The Minutes from 5th Jan 26** were unanimously approved.
- 5) **Progress Report.**
 - a) The chair was progressing the info board
 - b) After a brief discussion re the drainage situation, the clerk was asked to get a report from the highways department. Cllr Leech was thanked for his excellent work on the Harling Road ditch.
- 6) The meeting was adjourned for public participation.
- 7) The county and Breckland councillors gave informative reports on LGR, budgets, the lack of 5-year housing supply and new projects. Cllr Eagle kindly donated some new signs.
- 8) **Highways and Road Safety.** Cllr Thomas reported that the grips had been re dug and potholes on the Shropham Road and Little Hockham Lane, would be reported.
- 9) **Planning Matters.** Anglian Water had lodged an objection to application PL/2025/1331/OMAJ which may have far reaching consequences as they were a statutory consultee. Application PL/2026/0123/FMIN No objection but a request to add that the building could not be sold separate to the farm. PL/2026/0161/PAEC No objection. Cllr Lambert said he would relinquish his planning responsibilities in May and requested Cllr Wiltshire to be an interim assistant. The clerk would add this as an agenda item in March. Sapienta Trust had written to a resident advising they thought school expansion would not be required due to a falling birth rate. The clerk would contact the trust about the potential 80 new homes.
- 10) **Finance.** There was £23428.07 in the bank. Payments for approval were insurance at £1305.02, community car at £69.50, clerks' salary and PAYE at £193, Pearce & Kemp at £46.70. A £50 error had occurred which had been corrected. All transactions were approved
- 11) **Allotments.** A half allotment was due for letting. Cllr Leech said that more land could be made available for allotments if required. Regards water supply, it was suggested that the chair spoke with the village hall committee about a sub metered supply.
- 12) **Footpaths and Rights of Way.** Cllr Loft had reported some fly tipping which had been removed.
- 13) **Playing Field.** Cllr Lloyd gave thanks to Cllr Leech and his team for the works done on the playing field. New play equipment would soon be installed. A grant was hoped for.
- 14) **Forest Edge Court.** The clerk had sent details of the Flexibus. The bus company had yet to be pinned down.
- 15) **Litter Pick.** It was agreed to do this on Saturday 7th March at 10am.

16) **POL020.** The clerk would edit the policy and issue for approval. Cllr Wiltshire would be the named safeguarding lead.

17) **Waste Bin Issue.** It was agreed to contact SERCO as some bins were being left part full.

18) **Councillor Updates.** A sign was suggested for Vicarage Rd to be a no through road.

19) **Correspondence.** The clerk had been in discussion with highways over Little Hockham Lane junction access. A sign was suggested. The clerk would continue discussions.

It was agreed to see if a reduction in the streetlight maintenance costs could be considered.

Flexibus details would be sent to In Touch.

The clerk would contact the farmer responsible for the Pightle, to see if repairs can be carried out, following the actions of a "white van man" who tried to take a shortcut and realised that vehicles can get stuck in muddy areas. He was lucky to get pulled out, but it has left a hole.

20) **Next Meeting.** Monday 16th March.