

## Services at the Parish Church

Sundays 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) 10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)  
Thursdays 10.00 am Eucharist (BCP) 3rd Sunday 10.00 am All Age Communion

## Keeping the Water Out...

The recent appearance of scaffolding at St Andrew's Church marks the beginning of work to clear and repair external drainage systems and the installation of measures to stop pigeons roosting on the building.

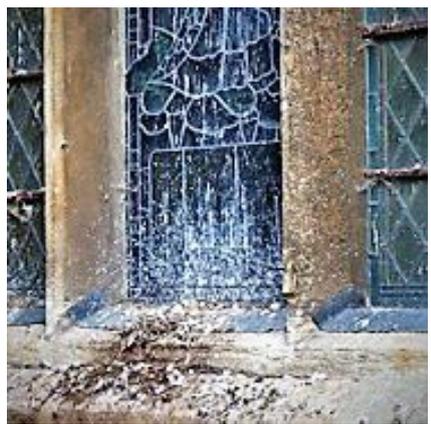
The work is funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £74,000, made possible by money raised by National Lottery players. St Andrew's Parochial Church Council was awarded the HLF grant to undertake urgent work to stop further water damage to St Andrew's Church. The problem is caused by overflowing gutters and downpipes blocked by the build-up of detritus from pigeons which roost and nest on the building.



Under the expert instruction of Iain Frearson, our Church Architect, Steve Austwick and Chris Mitchell of H Austwick Lead and Copper Roofing, Stow-cum-Quy, are hard at work fitting spikes on ledges and placing spiked wire cages in roof gutters to stop pigeons from nesting in these spaces. Preliminary clearance work was carried out between July and December 2018 by Soham-based firm Peter Saunders Builders and paid for by a generous donation from the Ivy Mary Mefie Deceased Charitable Fund. We

are extremely grateful to them all, and to Guy Merchant of Bird Control Consultancy Services International (BCCSI) for his ongoing advice and support of the project.

Work will continue through February when window guards will be fitted to further deter the pigeons and protect the stained glass and surrounding stonework from further damage. As the photograph shows, this work is badly needed to protect our wonderful stained glass windows and ensure their preservation for the enjoyment of present and future Soham residents.



## ...and Bringing the Community In



Part of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant is paying for a programme of heritage-related activities and events to encourage greater community use of St Andrew's Church. Claire Halley, a Soham resident, has been appointed to co-ordinate the programme. Last year she led activities for children at the Soham

Remembers event and at the Winter Fayre. Activities planned for this year include Maths in Church workshops with the primary schools and a 'Wild Weekend' in May, including a 'Wild About Churches' event on Saturday, 11th and a Pet Service at 4pm on Sunday, 12th. Look out for details in future issues.

## Shrove Tuesday

# Flippin' Marvellous Pancake Party



Shrove Tuesday 5 March,  
drop in 3.15-5pm

Crafts, pancakes, fun & chat  
All Welcome!

### Ash Wednesday 6 March



St Andrew's Ash Wednesday services this year are at 10.30am at Millbrook House (in a change to previously published information) and at 7.30pm in church.

Both include Holy Communion and imposition of ashes.

### Women's World Day of Prayer

This year's Women's World Day of Prayer service is on Friday 1 March, 2pm at Soham Methodist Church. The theme is 'Come – everything is ready' and has been prepared by women from Slovenia. All denominations are welcome and you don't have to be a woman to attend! Refreshments are served afterwards.

### New Church Electoral Roll

2019 is a year for the preparation of a completely new Electoral Roll for the Ecclesiastical (Church of England) Parish. The Parish's electoral roll starts again from scratch, meaning that everyone who wishes to be on the roll needs to apply, and old lists of electors are redundant. The electoral roll acts as a "membership list" for churchgoers in the parish, and entitles members to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, (APCM), or stand for office as Churchwarden or PCC member. You will be able to apply to be on the roll during February and March – forms are available in church or on the website ([www.standrews-soham.org.uk](http://www.standrews-soham.org.uk)) and should be returned to Lynne Webb or sent to the Vicarage, 27 The Oaks, Soham, CB7 5FF. The new roll will be exhibited in churches for at least two weeks before the APCM on 30 April 2019.



☆ **Soham Museum** Coffee Mornings – First Saturday of each month at Soham Library, 10am – 12 noon. Bring along any items or photos of local historical interest you may have, or just join us for a chat and coffee, All welcome

☆ **Over 60s Club** meets at the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground every Friday from 2-4pm.

☆ **Twilight Tuesday WI** meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at the Fountain Inn, Soham at 7.30pm. Next meeting: 12 February, Valentine's Sugarcraft.

☆ **Soham Phoenix Club** meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month between 9.30-11.30 at The Causeway Community Room, Soham. Each month we have a speaker, raffle, refreshments and a warm welcome. All for £2

## Plans for New Soham Station

Network Rail are to present their proposals for a new station in Soham at two community drop-in events in February. Come along to find out more about the current plans and ask any questions direct to the project team.

The drop-in events will be held in the Ross Peers Sports Centre on Tuesday, 26 February between 4pm and 8pm and on Wednesday, 27 February between 10am and 2pm.

## St Andrew's 200 Club

Winners for the final draw of 2018 were: Molly Smith £10, Maudie Manning £15, Doreen Martin £25, Delia Tickner £50, Christine Palmer £75, & Fay Carter £100

Thank you to everyone who supported us last year; tickets will be available for 2019 from the beginning of February from Lynne Webb and Linda Palmer.

## Co-op Community Fund

St Andrew's Church Restoration Appeal is one of the local causes Co-op members can donate their 1% spend to from now until November 2019. To donate, you need a Co-op membership card. To let the Co-op know that this is the cause you'd like to support, follow this link

<https://www.coop.co.uk/membership/local-causes> or call the membership helpline on 0800 023 4708

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# PARISH REGISTERS

## Funerals

6 December	Obed Chapman
10 January	Daphne Walton
15 January	Elsie May Ward
22 January	Ronald Soons
25 January	Donald Kent
29 January	Olive Pollard

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## Items for the March Edition of LodeStar

If you have anything you want to publicise or report on please send material to [aly-evans@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aly-evans@hotmail.co.uk) by Wednesday, 20 February.

## Viva Events



Chicago: High School Edition. From 5 – 9 March at 7.30pm and Saturday matinee at 3pm. At the King's Theatre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Newmarket, CB8 0JW.

Featuring a traditional jazz band, Chicago is a tale of fame, fortune and acquittal. Stand by for some snappy choreography, jazzy musical numbers including And All That Jazz, Razzle Dazzle, Cell Block Tango and Mr Cellophane all brought together in some gripping action!

Disney's Peter Pan jr at The Beeches in Isleham 14, 15, 16 February at 7pm.

Our very youngest members have been working very hard to bring you to this beloved Disney tale and invite you to fly away to Neverland this February!



Tickets for both these shows are £12.50, £11.50 over 60s, £10.50 under 12s from the box office: 0333 666 33 66, [www.ticketsource.co.uk/viva-arts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/viva-arts)

## News from Wicken Fen

There's still an abundance of winter wildlife to see at Wicken Fen. Our Countryside Manager, Martin Lester, has been enjoying the sounds of corvids on the fen; the corvid family includes crows, jackdaws, rooks, magpies and jays. Martin recommends a walk along Monk's Lode to hear the chattering of jackdaws and rooks. There are around 1000 of them at the moment, and they come in to roost on St Edmund's Fen almost immediately before dark. It's a spectacular sight and sound!

Visitors are enjoying seeing the magnificent hen harriers as they overwinter here at Wicken Fen.

If you can visit in the afternoon as the sun starts to set, head for the Visitor Centre, Boardwalk hide, or our new viewing platform to look out for hen



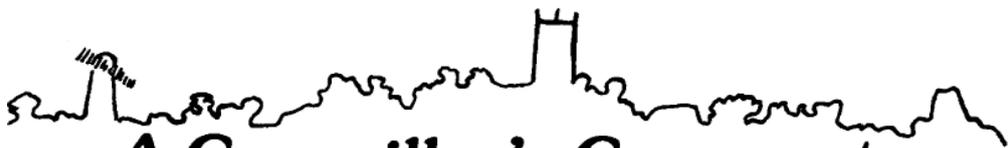
*Hen harrier at Wicken Fen by Richard Nicoll*

harriers quartering over the fen, looking for a safe place to roost. Our friendly team will be happy to point you in the right direction.

It's the time of year when we start planning for the new season ahead, and looking for new volunteers to help us at Wicken Fen. If you have some spare time and would like to join our friendly team, we currently have some interesting volunteer opportunities available. If you'd like to find out a little more about volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Manager, Peter Green, email: [peter.green@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:peter.green@nationaltrust.org.uk)

Join us for some fun events for half-term including Wintry Wild Art on Tuesday, 19 February and Go Wild: Winter Outdoor Survival on Thursday, 21 February. We'll also be offering 'Wild Weather' activities in the Family Discovery Area of the Visitor Centre. Winter weather can be unpredictable, but we've got ideas to get families outside whatever the weather!

Other events include: Mucky Pups for under 5s on 13 and 14 February (this month's theme is Feathery February), and our World Wetlands Day Walk for adults on Saturday, 2 February. Full details of all events and booking arrangements are available in the 'What's On' section of the Wicken website at [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen)



# A Councillor's Comments

## December

At our December meeting three people made use of Public Comment time. Janet Metcalf spoke about the new proposal of the Eastern Gateway project still trying to access the town via Brewhouse Lane. Ken Cranfield offered a vote of thanks to the council for providing for the Christmas lights and tree. A man from Qua Fen Common spoke about the impact the Eastern Gateway could have on the land. He mentioned of one trial digging, which when he went to look was full of water.

**County Council Reports:** Councillor Goldsack reported on his tour of the roads and problems found. He mentioned a project called Man Sheds, where men can join together using their skills to repair things. He said he was going to visit such a scheme in Ramsey called Ram Shed. He also gave us a report on a joint meeting with the authorities involved in the vexed question of sewerage concerning both Fordham and Soham with the new developments. They are making some progress, and the Fordham sewers may go to Newmarket.

**Brewhouse Lane Entrance into Town from Eastern Gateway:** It was proposed and carried that the council send a strong letter opposing this idea.

**Standard Bearer:** Glenn Woodbridge gave us a report on his daughter's achievement in this field. Once she is 18 she will compete in the national class.

**The Precept:** It was proposed that this be raised to 9.4%. This seems a lot, but with many new homes being built and occupied and paying council tax, it was estimated that the increase that Band D home owners would have to pay as a result of the 9.4% increase would be no more than 11p a week. There was a discussion on this with one councillor asking for 5% and another asking is 9.4% enough? But the decision was 9.4%

## January

Two people made use of Public Comment Time at our January council meeting. Jackie Hibbert spoke about the cemetery gates being closed at Christmas and also about a toilet being in use there as well. Ken Cranfield was asking about the cost that is mounting up regarding the proposed Eastern Gateway Development?

**County Councillor's Reports:** Councillor Bill Hunt gave a list of the ongoing work of the County Council. This included the opening of the Ely Railway Underpass by the end of February, the A14 maybe upgraded to a motorway, two Mobile Libraries, Children's Hospital Addenbrookes, Old Peoples Home in Burwell. He was asked about the progress on the South Cambridge Station and Soham Station, which he said will happen.

**District Council Reports:** Councillor Mark Goldsack asked Councillor Sennett to report on the Community Centre now opened at Millbrook in which 29 people attended that day and hoped the word will get around so more will attend. They are looking for volunteers to pick people up. Mark went on to speak of a Man Shed Scheme, where retired men looking for an activity to use their skills, join together to repair broken down items. Wendy Landsdown of 'Neighbourhood Cares' is hoping to acquire mobility equipment that can be used to transport people to the Doctors etc. There is also a plan to put Wi-Fi in the High Street.

**The Council Debate:** We discussed a Neighbourhood Plan which fits alongside the Local Plan; it cannot alter the local plan but it can enhance it. It was a question of whether we make a start now or wait till after the elections this May when the council may have new councillors. But this will need a sub group to work on it. We will have this on next meeting's agenda. There was discussion of lack of police presence in Soham and our response letter we sent to "Soundings" on the Eastern Gateway. *Councillor Ginn*

# *A View from the Vicarage*

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## **‘The bells! The bells!’**

Those of us fortunate enough – or unfortunate enough, depending on which way you look at it – to live within sounding distance of St Andrew’s Church’s bells have experienced some unaccustomed silence on occasional Sunday mornings of late: our bells haven’t always been rung.

There isn’t, I’m pleased to report, anything wrong with the bells. Nor is there any connection between the lack of ringing and the condition of the church tower (someone asked me not long ago if ringing had had to stop because the ensuing vibrations were what lay behind the masonry crumbling. My answer, happily, was no). Instead, the simple fact is that due to changes in shift patterns, difficulties in climbing the steps to the ringing chamber and people needing to be elsewhere on Sunday mornings, the band has unfortunately decreased to about six semi-regular ringers with four now being about the maximum for Sunday service ringing. At the same time, Steve Setter, Soham’s tower captain has recently completed a ringing teachers’ training course and so become an associate member of the Association of Ringing Teachers (‘ART’). Many congratulations to him!

There have been bells in St Andrew’s’ tower for centuries. An article Steve e-mailed to me refers to our ‘noble tower’ and reports ‘there were four bells in 1552, and probably five in the late 17th century, including a great bell recast, adding 126lb., in 1694. In 1788 the six bells, in poor condition, were recast as a peal of six, using £120 accumulated by Bond’s charity. Two others were added in 1790 and two more by subscription in 1808.’ Of the bells present in 1552, at least one was cast by Thomas Bullisdon of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry (closed, sadly, in 2017), the foundry from which Pennsylvania’s iconic Liberty Bell also came. The recasting of 1788 was carried out by Thomas Osborn of Downham, Norfolk, and that of 1808 by John Briant of Hertfordshire. Briant recast Osborn’s trebles and added two still smaller bells, so completing the ring of ten bells which still hangs in the tower today. Our bells range from 5cwt to an astonishing 21cwt in weight (learners begin on the lightest ones!).

Historically, from the 1790s, Soham’s ringers have been known as ‘the Soham Youths’. Steve tells me they don’t usually call themselves that these days, although he has – quite literally – got the T-shirt (‘We don’t usually refer to ourselves as the Soham youths, although I do have a T-shirt with it on’!). Perhaps the official name is deceptive: Steve says, ‘Ringers can be any age, though of course in Soham they have to be able to manage the stairs. In general we don’t usually start teaching children until they are 11, and at that sort of age it is preferable if a parent is present’. My mother started ringing when she retired: it’s never too late to give it a go. Having joined a band in the neighbouring town, she now enjoys many a Saturday/week-day evening visiting local towers along with her fellow ringers. They’re a refreshing mix of people – different generations, different backgrounds; some who’ve been ringing for decades, others, like my mother, who are novices, reliant upon the patience of the others when something – perhaps inevitably – goes wrong.

So, January may be behind us, but if you or someone you know is in search of a not-so-New Year’s resolution, how about taking up ringing – or getting back to it, if you used to ring once but are worried you’ve lost the knack? Ringers don’t need to be church-goers, or even people of faith – you’d be welcome to stay on for the service afterwards, or to slip away before it starts. Our existing ringers do both. Either way, we’d be glad to see – and hear – you amongst them.

Practices are from 7.30pm on Monday evenings. Either just turn up, or contact Steve Setter on 07879 351547 [stevesetter@ymail.com](mailto:stevesetter@ymail.com) Eleanor

[sohamvicar@gmail.com](mailto:sohamvicar@gmail.com) 01353 725948