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FINNINGHAM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026

MARCH—APRIL—MAY

Find us online at finningham.com

The editor opines...

What is going on? We have seen the photos of Sir Keir with Xi, William with Mohammed bin Salman, Andrew (along with Fergie and a generous sample of others from the Who's Who) with Epstein; were it not for the virtuous folk of Finningham I'd say the country has gone totally neurodiverse. Never mind - the rain has eased, daffodils are dancing in the sunshine, spring is working its miracles again.

Kristina Bee's concert was a bright spot in a very soggy winter. Don't worry if you missed it, I hear through my grapevine that you will be given another chance.

Thanks to those who have contributed items for publication, they make our newsletter much more interesting. I hope more of you will try putting pen to paper.

Village Walk Saturday 25th April, 2026
Meet on the Village Green 9.30am
All Welcome

Friends of Finningham have decided to have a Village Walk on Saturday 25th April, 2025 starting at 9.30am meeting on the Village Green. Hopefully the weather will have improved by then and we can all meet up and enjoy some fresh air and exercise. This is purely a social event and everyone is welcome including well behaved dogs.

This is a circular walk approximately 3 - 4miles. There will be an opportunity to enjoy coffee and cakes on our return at the Coffee Morning in the church which runs until 12 noon.

Hope to see you there.

Your newsletter is produced by Friends of Finningham. It can be read online at finningham.com Contributions to the summer edition should reach the editor by May 20th.

Email ianbacton@aol.com or phone 01449 780215.

Finningham Flower Festival

60th Anniversary

1966 – 2026

Remembering the last 60yrs and All About '60'

is being held in our beautiful
St Bartholomew's Church
throughout the Spring Bank Holiday weekend



Sat 2nd May 2-5pm
Sun 3rd May 11-5pm
Mon 4th May 11-5pm



Come and join us in the church on
Sunday 3rd May at 5pm
for a
Joyful Songs of Praise.
Children most welcome!

Visit the Marquee to buy jams, cakes, plants etc.
Try your luck on the Big Raffle, Fun Tombola, and much
more!

Throughout the weekend we will be serving delicious
homemade cakes, sausage rolls, and cream teas so please
pop in to see us at

Yew Tree House- just follow the signs



Our church at Christmas

Photos and ads printed in black and white can be viewed in colour in the online edition - go to finningham.com





COFFEE MORNING
at
ST BARTHOLOMEW'S
CHURCH

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
from 10 AM

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We're Transforming Our Trade Counter to a Brand-New Value Priced Showroom!

Our in-house tile showroom offers a stunning selection of premium tiles to bring your kitchen or bathroom vision to life. Our selection includes the latest trends, with a wide range of styles to fit your taste.



We pride ourselves on offering a personalised service to both trade and retail customers. We use state-of-the-art CAD technology to create 3D graphics to help you visualise the perfect design, with over 30 displays of bathrooms and kitchens in our expansive showroom to inspire you. We are committed to offering high-quality products at affordable prices, catering to all budgets without compromising on style.



We will continue to stock bathroom plumbing supplies but we will be focusing more showroom area to trade and value priced bathroom products.

CONTACT

01449 774900

www.stowmarketbathrooms.co.uk

3 Mill Street, Stowupland, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5BJ

Easter Biscuits with Chocolate

Prep time 20 minutes

Cook time 15 minutes

Ingredients

100g unsalted butter, softened

100g caster sugar, plus a little more for scattering

1 medium egg, separated

Grated zest of one lemon

200g plain flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting

50g currants

2 tbsp cocoa nibs

1-2 tbsp milk

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200/180C fan/ gas mark 6.
2. Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment
3. Put butter and sugar in a large mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon or spatula for 1-2 minutes until soft and fluffy.
4. Add the egg yolk and lemon zest and mix until well combined
5. Stir in the flour, currants and cocoa nibs with enough milk to form a dough (start with 1 tbsp of milk and add more if you need to. It needs to be a firm dough).
6. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface to about ½ cm thick
7. Cut out your biscuits using an approx. 9cm cutter (or your choice of cutter size).
8. Carefully place the cookies on the baking trays, leaving enough space for them to expand. Reroll the remaining dough and cut out as many biscuits as you can.
9. Bake for about 6-7 minutes then remove from the oven
10. In a small bowl whisk the egg white then gently brush over the biscuits and scatter with caster sugar.
11. Return to the oven for 5-6 minutes until they are just turning golden.
12. Remove and leave to cool for a few minutes before transferring to a cooling rack
13. Eat straight away or store in an airtight container.

Banana Pancakes

Ingredients per person: 1 banana, 1 egg, 100g plain flour, 300ml milk, pinch of salt, half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda, oil for frying.

1. Mash up the banana in a bowl until smooth.
2. Add the egg, flour and milk, along with the bicarb of soda and salt. Mix together until it forms a batter.
3. If the batter is too thick add a little water.
4. Heat up a frying pan with oil. Pour a ladleful of mix into the pan. You will probably have space in the pan for 2 or 3 pancakes.
5. Cook until golden brown on both sides. Serve with yoghurt, fruit, maple syrup to your liking.

Live

Music

Westhorpe Village Hall

Friday April 25th at 7.30pm

£5 via westhorpe.onesuffolk.net

Bar open

Performers will include John Evans, Paul Weston, Caroline Long, Alison Weston, Shums Aziz, Jane Scates, Jim Peart, Ricky Wilkinson, the Westhorpe Singers

Me and America

It is coming up to 22 years since I was last in the United States of America and it brought home to me that, over the years, my wife and I have spent numerous, memorable holidays in America.]

My first recollection was a visit to Miami, Florida with our family. It was in the days when long distance air travel was for the well heeled and too expensive for most of the population.

A businessman, called Freddie Laker, tried to make air travel available to more people by introducing lower air fares across the Atlantic. He created a company which I believe was called 'The Air Train', offering holidays to Miami.

Those of you who have visited Miami will know that you get beautifully sunny and hot days (together with an occasional heavy, wet storm) but it is very humid. The humidity can be very uncomfortable and drains you of all energy. Therefore, Americans holiday in Miami during the winter months when they get the sunshine without the humidity. Business dried up for some of the hotels which closed down for the summer but Freddie Laker persuaded some to stay open to host his holiday makers.

Fast Food restaurants were abundant and that is where the children liked to eat. Denny's was their favourite whereas we would walk to the Fontainblue hotel. The walk was short but the air conditioned hotel was very welcome.

Our children enjoyed themselves so much that they asked to go back the following year.

Eating and cooling off in the sea was not all we did, so next time I will share with you what we got up to the rest of the time.

David Wadlow

“It’s OK to be a late bloomer as long as you don’t miss the flower show.”

Jane Fonda

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WHAT'S ON - AT A GLANCE

- March 2 Friends of Finningham meeting. 7.30 in the church
- March 12, 10am Coffee with Erica and Gary Workman, The Hayloft, Wickham Rd
- March 13 , 7.30 Race Night at Westhorpe
- March 14, 2-4 Mother's Day Craft Club, in the church
- March 15 Mothering Sunday service, 9.30
- March 16 Council meeting, 7.30 in the church
- March 19 7.30 "Sounds Fun", Westhorpe
- March 28 Coffee Morning, 10am in the church
- March 29 Palm Sunday service, 9.30
- April 7 10-12 Rural Coffee Caravan, on the green
- April 17 , 7.30 Westhorpe Live Music Night
- April 25 a village walk, 9.30 from the green
- April 25 Coffee Morning, 10am in the church
- April 27 Friends of Finningham meeting (AGM) 7,30 in the church
- May 2-3-4 Flower Festival
- May 5 10-12 Rural Coffee Caravan on the green
- May 30 Coffee Morning 10am in the church
- FOR YOUR DIARY: Games on the Green, June 21st from 2.30

Christmas Lunch 5th December 12.30 at the Stoke Ash

White Horse

"I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I want to move in with them." Phyllis Diller

Regular activities in Westhorpe Village Hall

- Yoga** Mondays 10.45-12.15 Contact: Juliet Wright 07503 212670
- Art Club** Mondays (fortnightly) Paul Weston 07860 376592
- Line Dancing** Mondays 12.45-1.45 Alison Weston 07972 415205
- Carpet Bowls** Mondays 7.30—9 John Gladders 01449 780365
- Craft Club** Tuesdays (fortnightly) 10-12 Linda Cotgrove 01449 789142
- Singing for Pleasure** Wednesdays (3-weekly) Alison Weston
- Sounds Fun,** third Thursdays 7.30-9.30 Graham Hammond
07562 394580
- Fitness Class** Fridays 10—10.45 Becky Cruikshank 07734 414151

What is the Coffee Caravan?

The Rural Coffee Caravan is a charity. In fact, it is three campervans and one caravan which visit villages throughout Suffolk.

The Coffee Caravan was the brainchild of Sally Foden and the charity was created in an endeavour to tackle rural isolation and promote community spirit.

Visits to Finningham are from April to October in the morning of the first Tuesday of each month from 10 to 12.

The campervan parks on the village green. If you have not been, come along, you WILL be welcomed, offered tea or coffee as well as cake. It is free.

During the months of November to March some villagers host coffee mornings on their homes. On Thursday 12 March at 10am Erica and Gary Workman, The Hayloft, Wickham Road invite you to come along and join them for their coffee morning.



Mother's Day Craft Club



Saturday 14th March

2 - 4pm in Our Church, Finningham

Join us to make gifts for the special people in our lives for Mothering Sunday. We will be making cards, flower posies, decorating cakes and lots more. Refreshments will be available.

Please bring an adult to stay and help you craft.

For more information, please contact:



Revd Catriona: 07525920307

Or Marion: 07504779748



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From David Ogden:

TREASURE HUNT

On the afternoon of 7th June I am planning to run a Treasure Hunt event to raise funds for the Finningham Church Bells Fund; it will take place in Bury St Edmunds - but only if we can get enough participants.

The cost will be around £12 which will include a buffet at the venue, which is a private room in a pub. Any spending at the bar would be down to you, and I'd be asking for a discretionary donation to the fund.

If you want to find out more then please message me at **davidogden62@gmail.com** . I will collate interest at the end of the month and decide if the event is on.

All are welcome - not exclusive to Finningham residents.

The next meeting of Friends of Finningham will be held on Monday 2nd March, 7.30 in the church. Among other things, we will be discussing plans for Games on the Green on June 21st. We would like to hear your ideas.

All are welcome!

Our AGM will be on April 27th.

“Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what's for lunch.”

Orson Welles

Bells are Chiming in Finningham – Tina Saunders

The 23rd of January 2026 was a joyous day for St Bartholomew's when our three bells were chimed together for the first time in many years. And what a wonderful sound they made echoing through the village on that day. Several villagers came to witness and enjoy those lovely chimes.

Historically, bells were used to summon the faithful such as monks and worshippers to Mass or daily prayers, but they also have a symbolic presence being the 'voice' of the church reminding the community of Gods unfailing presence.

In 2003 the flower festival was all about bells and a lady called Di Barker authored an impressive article providing the community with interesting facts about the church bells. The article explains that the earliest tenor bell (C-B) is medieval thought to be cast around 1300-1350. It has no inscription, so its original maker remains a mystery so far.

A renowned East Anglian family of bell founders cast the second bell: Braysers of Norwich in approximately 1480. It is decorated with three shields on its shoulder, three bells and a crown sprigged.

In 1553 it is recorded that there were three bells hanging in the tower, but the present-day treble bell must have been replaced because it bears the inscription Thomas Lester & Tho^s. Pack Fecit 1754. Lester & Pack worked for and owned the bell foundry in Whitechapel London at this time in history.

The bell was then recast as a note in the minutes of the Church Vestry meeting at Easter 1908 records that £5 was to be sent to the architect for his services on the tower and bells which had been restored in memory of Cannon Constantine Frere, Rector of Finningham 1847 – 1905. On or near the treble is a medallion bearing the initials J.W. & S., dated 1907, and a plaque: "Day hung us". The foundry, John Warner & Sons, cast bells in London from 1788 - 1924 and Days of Eye undertook the task of rehangng the refurbished bells with new fittings but on the old frame.

Today there are still three beautiful bells hanging in the 14th century church tower at St Bartholomew's which are reached through a set of steep ladder type stairs, certainly not a climb for the faint hearted. This means they remain unseen by most people bar a few brave bell ringers.

Things changed when we applied for a grant from the Adrian Knights fund to augment our bells and we started to delve into the history of our lofty bells wondering what they looked like and how they sounded when chimed. Our Church warden always chimed one bell for the call to service on a Sunday, but we had no idea how they would sound together.

So, with the kind assistance of Neal Dodge, the Public Relations Officer for the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, who climbed into the upper tower he was able to take photographs whilst

ascertaining that the bells were safe to be chimed. These photographs will be made available in the church to view.

The bell tower had accumulated a large number of items so we were filled with gratitude for our kind village community members who assisted in clearing the tower so that our bell ringers from the surrounding areas could chime our bells for our Sunday services in a safer environment.

These three bells have seen some action over the years with refurbishments and ringing out through the village for special occasions such as the Millenium so we really hope and pray that our historic bells will be augmented and will continue to resonate and call worshippers to the services, mark significant Christian, National and personal occasions for years to come as we look to future proofing our bells for future generations to delight in.

For the bells are the voice of the church; They have tones that touch and search the hearts of young and old. The Bells of San Blas 1882 - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God – Charles Spurgeon

Tina Saunders



News from Finningham Parish Council

The Parish Council extends best wishes, albethey slightly belated, to all residents for the New Year.

Our first meeting of 2026 was held on Monday the 9th of February, with Cllr Charter saying in his Chairman's report:

'Looking ahead, I am very optimistic about the year to come. We are fortunate to have a strong, dedicated and supportive team of councillors who consistently give their time and energy for the benefit of the parish. I would like to thank each of you for your continued commitment, cooperation and good humour. Here's to a positive and productive year ahead, working together for the good of our community.'

County elections May 2026

As you are most likely already aware, the Government has confirmed that all local elections in May 2026 will now go ahead.

Mid Suffolk District Council is responsible for delivering the elections for Suffolk County Council, and did not pause preparations so will be able to proceed as normal. They will be issuing further election information over the coming weeks as part of their usual process.

A statement from Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council can be found on their website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/county-council-statement-on-may-2026-local-elections>

National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order application

The Norwich to Tilbury examination in public has now started. Full details are available on the Planning Inspectorate's website : <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>.

Finningham Parish Council's written submission to the Planning Inspectorate can be found on our website: <https://www.finninghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>
<https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury>
<https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions/>

Finningham Bus Service Feedback Request

The Parish Council would like residents' feedback on the current bus services, which all run Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays :

- 72 Gislingham to Diss service, stopping in Finningham, and operated by Simonds.
- 460 Eye to Stowmarket service, stopping in Finningham, operated by Farelina Bus & Coach
- VC001 Gislingham to Stowmarket service, stopping in Finningham, operated by Stowmarket Minibus & Coach.

As part of Suffolk County Council's new Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), we would like your feedback on these services. Do you use them? If not, what are your reasons? Would you like to see increased frequency or later running times? All feedback whether positive or negative is welcomed, and will help us to take any necessary steps to improve the services, and support the community.

Please email your feedback to the Clerk:
clerk@finninghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Council contact information and next meeting date

The Parish Council meets at least 10 times a year in St Bartholomew's Church, Finningham. Members of the community are always welcome to attend, and the agenda includes a 'public participation' item, to allow members of the public to contribute to the meeting, or raise any concerns.



DO YOU HAVE A SPARE MORNING?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP OUR HEDGEHOG RESCUE?

We are looking for Volunteer help with our admin tasks. ie General office duties, answering the phone, word processing, photocopying, mailing & helping maintain databases. Attendance at our HQ on A140 at Stonham is essential as [this](#) cannot be done working at home.

You choose which day(s) you can help and how many hours (between 10 – 2pm on a weekday) you would like to offer us.

Please email [<suffolkprickleshedgehogrescue@gmail.com>](mailto:suffolkprickleshedgehogrescue@gmail.com) and we can send you more details.

Contact the editor if you would like to place an ad.

Full page £25

Half page £15

Quarter page £8

Prices are per edition for a black and white ad.

LPG COMMUNITY BUYING GROUP - COLLECTIVE SAVINGS OF £1830 TO DATE

(from Graham Davie)

It is now 1 year since I tentatively suggested to the local community the formation of a bulk LPG buying group. Presently there are 7 members, fewer than I originally envisioned. However, from little acorns big oak trees grow.

The group has evolved differently from my visualisation (that of emulating the many oil buying groups throughout the country). Instead it has become more of an informal chat forum where information is exchanged on gas prices, contracts and customer service. Supporting each other on negotiating new supplier contracts is key as there is a dearth of information published on LPG prices and supplier contracts; all to the benefit of the supplier/distributors who seek to increase prices (and profit margins) despite the wholesale price of LPG declining by 21% in the last 2 years.

Of the group members who have recently renewed their supplier contracts a very healthy saving of £1830 has been achieved. A good outcome on which to build.

If you are paying more than 45p per litre and more than £110pa in tank rental and would like to make a saving, it's free no hidden charges or commission.

Please contact grahamdavie@mail.com **07765 863200**

Or glenda.shepherd2@btinternet.com

Jam jars wanted. Please leave in church foyer.



Alzheimer's
Society

WESTHORPE CHARITY RACE NIGHT



*Join us for a great night of
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**Friday 13th March,
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Visit westhorpe.onesuffolk.net or
call Alison 07972 415205

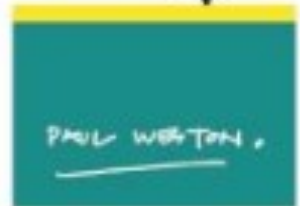
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Bus Services

Finningham to Stowmarket VC001 service 9.45 weekdays from Wickham Road near the Old Post Office. Return journey leaves from Bury Street (near the lights) at 1pm.

Finningham to Eye and Diss 72 service 9.35 weekdays from Gislingham Road (eastbound). Return leaves Diss bus station at 1pm.

Rural Connect phone 01449 700792

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Kristina Bee gets a standing ovation