December 2026 / January 2027 Issue 252

Grafham Gossip



Deadline for February 2027: by 9:00am on Friday 15th January



Christmas Giving

6th December 9:30am

All Saints Grafham

A special service to celebrate Giving

Donations of Christmas goodies welcomed to be distributed to Godmanchester Foodbank

More info in View from the Pew on page 2 - 3

Messy Advent see page 9

Editor's Note…



Here's the final Grafham Gossip of 2026!

I hope this finds you ready to enjoy the festive season ahead. It promises to be a busy run-up to Christmas, with plenty going on here in Grafham as well as other local events featured inside these pages - if you're looking for even more to do.

There's no January issue, so our next one will be February's. Please send your contributions to editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk in good time for the next deadline: 09:00am on Friday, 15th January 2027.

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ed.



Tues 15th Dec

See page 6 for details





Travelling Nativity 2026

Grafham's Nativity set will be travelling round the village again, from **Sunday 6th December.** The Travelling Nativity box contains knitted nativity figures to play with plus books, jigsaws and games suitable for preschool and Key Stage 1 children.

The box goes from house to house. This is available free to anyone in Grafham. All you need to do is call or text Jill Tyack on 07892 720835 and book it for a night.

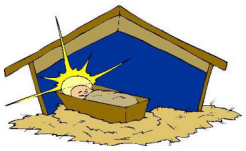
The nativity figures will end up in church on **Christmas Eve at 3pm** for our traditional and popular Crib Service. If you have not been before why not give it a go - it is short and 'user-friendly' and you can be sure of a very warm welcome!



All Saints Church, Grafham



Paperback book sales continue in the porch. Thank you for your donations. They provide a valuable valuable source of income for our church. Donations can be made by cash into the blue tin attached to the bookshelf or by card or phone using our contactless device (in the church, if not in the porch.)



Saturday 28th Nov see the notice on page 9	**15:00** ***Messy Advent Brampton*** **17:00** ***Church Hall***
5th Sunday 29th Nov	**11:00** **Three Village Communion** 1st Sunday of Advent **Brampton**
Wednesday 2nd Dec	***09:00*** *Informal Morning Prayer* ***Grafham***
1st Sunday 6th Dec	**09:30** **Christmas Giving** at Morning Worship **Grafham** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**
Wednesday 9th Dec	***09:00*** *Informal Morning Prayer* ***Grafham***
2nd Sunday 13th Dec	**09:30** Holy Communion **Ellington** **11:00** **Morning Worship Brampton** **18:30** **Taizé Grafham**
Tuesday 15th Dec	**19:00** **Curry and Carols at the Cinnamon** Grafham see p. 6
Saturday 19th Dec Carol Services	**16:00** **Carol Service Grafham** **17:45** **Carol Service Ellington**
3rd Sunday 20th Dec	**09:30** Morning Worship **Ellington** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**
Wednesday 24th Dec Christmas Eve	**15:00** **Crib Service Grafham** **17:30** **Carol Service Brampton** **23:00** **1st Communion of Christmas Ellington**
Thursday 25th Dec Christmas Day	**09:30** **Holy Communion Grafham** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**
4th Sunday 27th Dec	**No Service at Grafham** **11:00** **Said Communion Brampton**

Listed on the left and below, you will find:
- Grafham Services
- Sunday services for Brampton and Ellington
- Some extra services and events at times e.g. Christmas, Easter

The Brampton 11.00 Sunday service is live-streamed every week and can be accessed via www.eastleightonstone.com

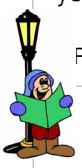
For a full list of services for all three churches visit: www.eastleightonstone.com and click on: 'See the Calendar for more'

Children's Church

There is a children's corner in each of the three churches with books, toys, crayons and paper for the children to use. Parents are welcome to use these areas during church services.

Also, Children's Church takes place every Sunday during term time at the 11:00am service in St. Mary Magdalene, Brampton. Children start off in church, then go to the church hall with adult leaders. The 3 - 8 year olds meet downstairs and the 9 -14 year olds meet in the upper room. They return to the church before the end of the service.

For more information contact: children@eastleightonstone.com



January 2027 Services

1st Sunday 3rd January	**09:30** Morning Worship **Grafham** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**
2nd Sunday 10th Jan	**09:30** Holy Communion **Ellington** **11:00** **Morning Worship Brampton** **18:30** **Taizé Grafham**
Wednesday 13th Jan	***09:00*** *Morning Prayer with Duncan* ***Grafham***
3rd Sunday 17th Jan	**09:30** Morning Worship **Ellington** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**
Wednesday 20th Jan	***09:00*** *Morning Prayer with Duncan* ***Grafham***
4th Sunday 24th Jan	**09:30** Holy Communion **Grafham** **11:00** **Morning Worship Brampton**
Wednesday 27th Jan	***09:00*** *Informal Morning Prayer* ***Grafham***
5th Sunday 31st Jan	**11:00** **Three Village Communion Brampton**
1st Sunday 7th February	**09:30** Morning Worship **Grafham** **11:00** **Holy Communion Brampton**

Contacting the clergy:
Rev. Duncan Goldthorpe 01480 459246
or 07907 694177
rev.duncan.goldthorpe@eastleightonstone.com
Churchwardens:
Sue Roberts 07916 431086 sue@eastleightonstone.com
Brian Radbone 07916 431091 brian@eastleightonstone.com

For Grafham Church Donations at any time, please scan the QR code. Thank you



To join the mailing list for the Parish Newsletter, visit: www.eastleightonstone.com and click on 'Get in touch'

View from the Pew



It is hard to believe that winter is upon us as December arrives. At the time of writing we are still enjoying some sunny days, albeit rather crisp and chilly. Nevertheless we are ready with our heated pews, soft blankets and hand warmers at our services.

We are grateful to our Authorised Lay Minister, Jill Dighton for leading the Act of Remembrance at the Grafham Memorial on 8th November. Thank you also to Brian Homewood for playing the Last Post and Reveille so beautifully. This was very much appreciated by around 50 people. (Photographs can be seen on right and page 3.)

So we now look forward to our Christmas services and the first of these is 6th December, the second Sunday of Advent. On that first Sunday of the month service we generally celebrate Christmas Giving when we invite donations of Christmas goodies to be brought to the service. Goods such as mince pies, puddings and cakes are gratefully received by Godmanchester foodbank to which one of our volunteers will take them to be distributed to vulnerable families. If anyone who wishes to donate cannot get to the service please contact Hazel 07870 307388.

Continued at the bottom of page 3

Parish News November meeting

Minutes of parish council meetings can be found on the village website: https://grafham.org.uk/parish-council

Meeting with Anglian Water
Anglian Water were due to come to the November meeting of the Parish Council, to answer questions submitted by the Parish Council following the previous meeting. They were subsequently unable to attend as their Technical Manager was taken ill at short notice.

The Parish Council has agreed to invite them back to a meeting in the New Year.

New Village Hall Sign
The Parish Council was delighted to note that the New Village Hall sign had been installed. Our thanks go to Cllr Alf Lesurf for designing the sign.

Local Government Reorganisation – Further Update
The latest Government's Ministerial Statement on Local Government Reorganisation did not confirm a timeline for the decision being made for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

Consequently, there will be NO Shadow Elections to the New Unitary Authorities in May 2027.

However, subject to a Ministerial decision it is expected that the New Unitary Councils for our area will succeed the current County, City & District Authorities on 1st April 2029. If this is the case, then shadow Elections to the New Unitary Authorities will be in May 2028.

All the current four Options /Proposals are still on the table and remain under consideration.

The Parish Council will continue to update you all as we get information.



Christmas Tree
The Parish Council has agreed to erect a Christmas tree by the village sign again this year. Our thanks go once again to Chris Brown for providing the tree and to Brian & Sue Homewood for the use of their electricity.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday 1st December at 7.30pm

Cllr Ian Gardener
Grafham Parish Council Chairman

Contact details for Grafham's Parish, District and County Councillors

For more information about your Parish Council see the village website: https://grafham.org.uk/index.php/parish-council or contact a member of the parish council or the parish clerk.

Grafham Parish Council Parish Clerk, **Lisa Hazel** clerk@grafhampc.org
Ian Gardener Chair 01480 812821 i.gardener@grafhampc.org **David Russell** d.russell@grafhampc.org
Patrick Curran p.curran@grafhampc.org **Sunil Gogna** s.gogna@grafhampc.org **Diana Thomas** d.thomas@grafhampc.org
Alf Lesurf a.lesurf@grafhampc.org **Nicholas Blackburn** n.blackburn@grahampc.org



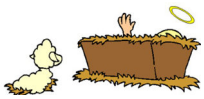
Grafham's County Councillor
Liam Beckett 07312 081 892
Liam.Beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
C/O Members Services,
Cambs County Council, Box ALC 2650,
New Shire Hall, Alconbury PE28 4YE



Grafham's District Councillor
Stephen Cawley 07925 741 167
stephen.cawley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
34 North Road
Alconbury Weston, PE28 4JU

View from the Pew *continued from page 2*

Our next special Christmas celebration is Curry and Carols at the Cinnamon on Tuesday 15th December at 7:00pm. Contact the Cinnamon directly for your seats, this event gets booked up very quickly. Our Carol Service is on Saturday 19th December at 4:00pm followed by mulled wine and cake. On Christmas Eve at 3:00pm our Crib Service welcomes children of all ages and every generation! Holy Communion will be at 9:30am on Christmas Day.



We wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and a healthy new year.





Act of Remembrance, Grafham
8th November 2026

"Has the bin man bin Mam?"



Alternate Wednesdays
Blue Bin - Recycling and Black Bin - Refuse
Every other Thursday Green Bin - Garden Waste

* **Garden bins collected only if you have subscribed to the Garden Waste Collection Service.**
For details see the Garden Waste section of:
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste
Changes to Disposal of Food Waste Find out more on the Food Waste page of www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk



Note Changes in December

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
30	1	Blk+ F	3	4	5	6
7	8	Blu+ F	G*	11	12	13
14	15	Blk+ F	17	18	19	20
21	Blu+ F	G*	24	25	26	27
28	29	Blk+ F	31			

Note Changes in January

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	Blu+ F	G*	9	10
11	12	Blk+ F	14	15	16	17
18	19	Blu+ F	G*	22	23	24
25	26	Blk+ F	28	29	30	31

For waste and recycling services, visit:
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins or call 01480 388640
between 8:45am and 5:00pm

F= New Food Caddy
https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/food-waste

Wildlife Trust for **Beds, Cambs & Northants**
Hunts Local Group

Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora Society – Founded in 1948

Evening wildlife talks are held in Brampton Memorial Centre every second Wednesday from September to March and outdoor meetings take place in the Spring, Summer and Autumn

Use QR for all Wildlife Trust events (you can then filter by location, date or Local Group)

For more on Hunts Fauna and Flora Society use this QR

FACT Community Transport

- **Dial-A-Ride**
  Provides **door-to-door** shopping trips for people unable to access public transport due to age, disability, mobility or lack of local bus routes. Bus passes can be used.
- **Dial-A-Car**
  You must register and pay for this service. It is pre-bookable for visits to friends, relatives, medical appointments or anywhere that you cannot get to using the Dial-A-Ride service.

More info: www.fact-cambs.co.uk Tel: 01354 661234
Email Info@Cotransport.org

Using TIGER on Demand



You can book a journey to and from anywhere within the TIGER On Demand travel zones using any of the virtual bus stops.

When can I travel? Monday to Saturday from 06:30 – 19:00. There is no service on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

How do I book? The quickest way to book is to download the Tiger on Demand app, from Google Play or App Store. Booking can be made up to 48 hours in advance of the journey.

Alternatively you can book on: www.tigerondemand.co.uk or you can call 01480 595440 Mon to Sat 06:00 – 19:30

How much does it cost?

- Adults £3.00 per journey - Choose 'Adult' option on booking
- Under 5s travel for FREE - Choose 'Infant' fare option
- Children 5-16yrs £1 per journey - Choose 'Youth' fare option
- Concessionary Bus Pass Holders and Disability Bus Pass Holders travel for FREE - choose 'Senior' or 'Person with disability option on booking. Show your pass to the driver on boarding.
- Tiger Pass Holders (Under 25 yrs - you need to apply for a FREE pass, see website below) £1 per journey, ask for the 'Reduced' fare option when booking. Show your pass to the driver when you board.

How do I pay? Use a debit or credit card to book over the phone. Drivers are not able to accept cash or card payments.

For more details and to keep up to date, see
https://transport.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/buses/tiger-on-demand



Useful Phone Numbers

All emergencies **999** Police non-emergencies **101**
NHS - help for your symptoms **111**
Hard of hearing textphone service **1800 1101 or** for emergencies **Text 999**
Huntingdon Police Station **01480 456111**
Anti-terrorism Hotline **0800 789321**
Action Fraud **0300 123 2040**
Crimestoppers **0800 555111** (anonymous)
To report anti-social behaviour in Grafham **01480 388388** or email: crm_cpe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
To stop unwanted phone calls, Telephone Preference Service TPS **03450 700707**
To stop unwanted mail (Royal Mail) **03457 740740**
Power cut Call 105 or 08003 163105 or text POWER and your postcode to 80876
UK Power Networks – Delivering your electricity
http://www.powercut105.com

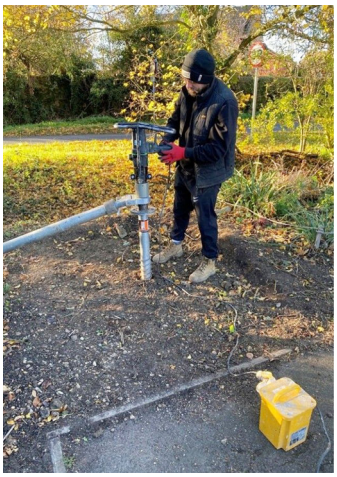
Talking Shop

And so it begins…





Most of you are aware that the current shop, which has served us well, will be replaced by a new more permanent structure early in the new year. The background work has been done, funds agreed and now the business starts of preparing the site in readiness. Visitors to the shop will have noticed that over the course of the first ten days of November the flower beds have now disappeared (the flowers will be replanted) and the surrounding trees have been cut back.



There was excitement on Friday 13th when engineers sunk several test piles to make sure the ground and planned positioning of the piles on which the steels and new building would sit would be up to specification.

Friday the 13th, it could have gone badly wrong but there were sighs of relief and smiles all round when the testing went well – one less headache. So, we are still very much on track.

Cracking the Cashflow

Whilst it was wonderful to get generous grants for the new shop building from the Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) CIL fund and from Thalia. These grants are only paid out on receipt of a paid invoice. Fortunately, HDC's grant, which covers the purchase of the new portacabin, allowed for their grant to be paid in two stages. The first for the 50% cabin deposit and second on installation. Nevertheless, the shop did not have the reserves to cover this outlay, so the obvious option was to get an overdraft.

Overdraft Panic

Easier said than done – at least with the shop's bank – which will remain nameless. Our initial application was turned down but, after further scrutiny, was accepted when they saw that there were three personal guarantors. The bank advisor at this point said the process would typically take six weeks before the shop would have access to the overdraft. It then became apparent that the bank required the guarantors to have advice from an independent solicitor to confirm that they were not idiots and were capable of understanding the small print! All this takes time and adds cost. In the meantime, to meet the deadlines for installation in January the shop needed to pay the cabin deposit.

Famous Five to the Rescue

Fortunately, five residents and good friends of the shop agreed to make short term interest free personal loans of £5,000 each. Phew! This meant that the cabin order could be placed, the deposit paid, we would not lose precious time (and sales in the Spring) and we could apply for the first instalment of our grant from HDC. All this is now in process. Meanwhile the wheels of the overdraft move slowly. A solicitor has been identified; thank goodness we did not need three different solicitors! Letters have been signed. The bank now needs to give the solicitor their instructions; we then need to meet the solicitor and sign the guarantee. The solicitor them returns the signed guarantee to the bank's legal team confirming that the advice was "independent". The banks securities team then need to complete their internal requirements before the bank will finalise the overdraft. The bank will then inform the Bank of England, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Financial Conduct Authority, The Office of the Information Commissioner, The Central Bank of the European Union, and the International Monetary Fund. Actually, this last sentence is not true!

What the Dickens

Anyone who has read Little Dorrit, and it is a worthwhile read, will discover the Circumlocution Office. This is a government department, whose purpose is not to solve problems or serve the public, but to master and perpetuate the science of delay, obstruction, passing the buck, ensuring jobs for the boys and suffocate innovation. Such is modern life foretold in 1857!

Thank You

On behalf of Grafham, the shop committee would like to give huge thanks to the lenders and guarantors for backing our modest little community enterprise.

Minty Fresh

Preparations are in full swing for the pop-up shop, aka the changing room in the village hall, in readiness. Electrics are being rerouted to make sure the fridge, and freezer can be squeezed in and, of course, power and Wi-Fi for the new till. Although the space is a tad 'cosy' there were a surprising number of holes and dents in the walls, so special hat tip to Ian Andrews who has tackled the work with his usual gusto. We now have a beautifully flat, minty fresh and sparkling place to move to.

It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas



We now have a wide variety of Christas stock. Whether you are looking for the ingredients to make your own or a ready-made cake, yule logs, extra special hocolates, boxed hampers, treats and tasty stocking fillers – there's something for everyone.

Come and have a browse.









Talking Shop continues overleaf with Volunteer Spolight

Talking Shop continued from page 5

Volunteer Spotlight

Not all our volunteers serve in the shop, there are those who are more 'behind the scenes', and this month features Jill Tyack who keeps us looking blooming lovely:

I have lived in the village nearly all my adult life and have raised three children here. When I retired from teaching, I was able to indulge in my various hobbies, none more so than my passion for gardening and wildlife. During covid I undertook to remove the enormous bramble patch that was encroaching on the village hall car park and started to plant it up with any plants that came to hand. I then took on the raised bed in front of the shop and started filling it with herbs, and then there were the other raised beds...

With the upgraded shop coming in the new year, it's the perfect opportunity to revamp the garden. It will be in flux over winter while work is going on. I will be redoing the herb bed for the village to use while continuing to plant up the borders to make a flourishing habitat for wildlife and people alike. As a side note I am also helping to 'rewild' areas of the churchyard. I am so proud of the amenities that Grafham has gained while I have lived here, which could not have happened without the work of many volunteers.

Grafham Village Shop Christmas Opening Hours

December 23rd 8am - 4pm
Closed 24th until 3rd January

4th January Pop-up shop opens
Monday – Saturday 9am - 3pm
Sunday 10am - 2pm



When the new shop opens normal hours will resume.

www.grafhamvillageshop.co.uk ***01480 810119*** ***See back page for Normal Winter Opening Hours***



Tuesday 15th December 7pm

A fun evening of Christmas carols and curry!

A three course buffet for £23 at The Cinnamon

Between courses we'll sing some Christmas carols together and enjoy festive cheer.

Donations to the church - gratefully received.

Feel free to come along as a group or on your own.

To book please call:

Shamim at the Cinnamon
01480 812211/811316



Thursford Christmas Spectacular

Robinson's Coaches are running a trip on 16th December 2026

Tickets with admission included cost: adult £82, concessions £80, children £70

Tel. Robinson's Coaches, Kimbolton 01480 860581





Thank you very much...



to everyone who has contributed to such a great variety of articles over the past year—without you, there would be no Grafham Gossip.

A special thank you goes to our fantastic team of deliverers, who make sure every home in Grafham receives a copy each month, as well as to our regular advertisers and the Parish Council and the Grafham Trout for their continued support with printing and publishing costs.

Wishing you and all our readers a Happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful New Year! Ed.

Churchyard News

Wow – well that was exhausting! Such a good thing we had half time tea and cakes!

Work in progress...

The graves on the East side of the churchyard are being taken over by brambles so some brave volunteers have excavated and cut wheelbarrow loads of brambles back. We had a fire to destroy the roots growing between gravestones and can now see stones not seen for a long time - **Workout part 1.**





The dead leylandii hedge surrounding the Garden of Remembrance has been cut right back and part of it is now less than six feet high. The stones are now clear! **Workout 2** meant a lot of sawing and chopping and carrying the remains to the greedy fire which devoured all the material swiftly .

Workout 3 – feeding and tending the fire!



The end results!





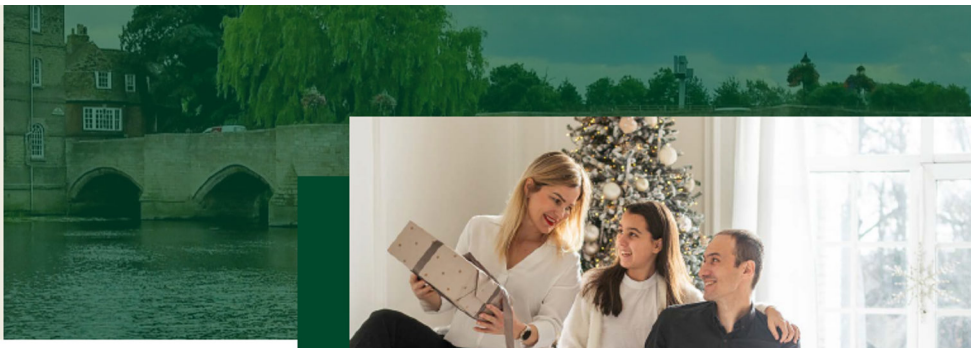
Thank you so much to the small team who helped to make this happen.

Come and join us next time – maybe?

Debs.russell@gmail.com



Peter Lane & PARTNERS
EST 1990



Peter Lane & Partners are your Trusted Local Property Experts this Christmas.

Good estate agency is about understanding your local market and providing an exceptional service, time and time again.

Looking for an estate agent who truly understands the property market? At Peter Lane & Partners, we've been serving the local community since 1990. Our passion for property and dedication to our clients has made us a leading estate agent in Huntingdon, Kimbolton, St Ives, St Neots and the surrounding villages.

Rated Excellent on Trustpilot and Rated 5 Stars on Google

★★★★★

Contact us now for a free, considered and professional market appraisal of your home

Visit peterlane.co.uk to request a valuation online in just a few clicks

Call us to book your FREE property valuation.
Rated Excellent on Trustpilot **01480 860400**

kimbolton@peterlane.co.uk



Season's Greetings



To advertise

email:
editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk

Community notices are free

Business adverts are priced according to size

They start at £6.50 for a box, payable in advance

This money goes towards printing costs

FRIDAY NIGHT YOUTH

Fridays 6.45pm - 8.15pm
HCC, 83a High Street
PE29 3DP

Join us every other Friday to meet new people, to grow in faith together, for games and activities, and to have fun!

Contact Ruth Hunt for more info
ruth@huntingdonparish.org

Friday 18th September
Friday 2nd October
Friday 16th October

(Half term activity tbc)

Friday 6th November
Friday 20th November
Friday 4th December
Friday 18th December

SCAN TO SIGN UP!

FNY

This activity is delivered in partnership with Huntingdonshire Community Church (HCC)

Chewing the Cud with Rev. Duncan Goldthorpe,

Rector of The Parish of East Leightonstone



Finding Hope and Courage for the Seasons Ahead

As the autumn leaves fall and the winter air turns crisp, we find ourselves at a unique threshold: between the warm, familiar glow of Christmas and the unwritten horizon of the New Year. This season invites both reflection and anticipation, calling us to anchor our hearts in God's timeless promises.

John 3:16
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

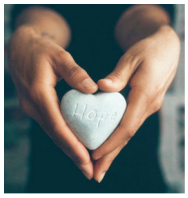
Christmas reminds us of the ultimate source of our hope. **John 3:16** gives us the foundation of our faith: God's love for the world, revealed through the gift of his Son.

It is easy to feel consumed by the suffering around us: wars, poverty, climate change, financial pressures, broken political promises and world leaders competing for power. Yet John's words give us hope. The Nativity is not merely a beautiful story from the past; it is the moment when love broke through the darkness and offered lasting hope. Emmanuel—God with us—means that we never face the world's uncertainties alone.

This hope gives us the firm foundation we need to step into the New Year with courage. As we face the uncertainties of the coming months, the words of **Joshua 1:9** can serve as our spiritual compass:

Just as God reassured Joshua on the edge of the Promised Land, he offers us the same assurance today. We do not need to know what the future holds, because we know who holds the future.

Isaiah 2:4
"He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."



Let us carry the light of Christmas into the dawn of the New Year. May your Christmas be filled with the peace of Christ, and may each step into the year ahead be guided by holy courage.

Every blessing
Duncan

Brampton's Mothers Union

Quiet Evening
Tuesday 8th December
at 7:30pm
Brampton Church Hall

This will be a reflective evening of prayers and readings followed by Christmas nibbles.

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 12th January
at 7:30pm
Brampton Church Hall

In January we will meet for our AGM and welcome our members and anyone who would be interested in joining.

We will reflect on 2026 when Mothers Union (MU) celebrated 150 years and we look forward to 2027. After the formal part of the evening, our speaker, MU member Sheila Richardson will be providing an update of the MU Positive Relationships course provided by MU volunteers through the Chaplaincy at HMP Littlehey.

We look forward to welcoming everyone.
For more details of the above meetings email:
mu@eastleightonstone.com

Mothers' Union website: www.mothersunion.org

East Leightonstone Parish

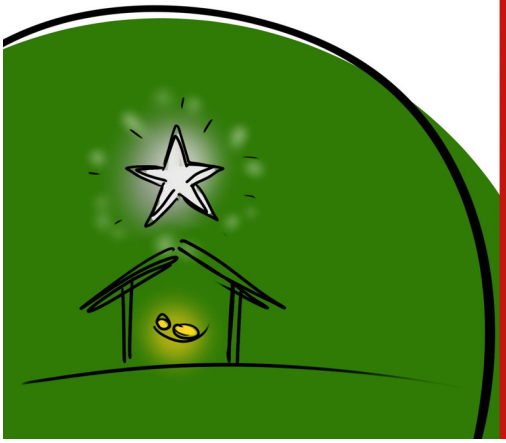
Messy Advent

Free Christmas Fun and Crafts!

St Marys Church Hall
Church Lane
Brampton
PE28 4PF

3pm - 5pm
Saturday 28th
November

Contact: children@eastleightonstone.com



Mulled Wine

Ingredients

- 1 bottle of red wine
- 60g/2oz demerara sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teacup lemonade
- ½ teacup orange juice
- ½ lemon sliced
- ½ orange sliced
- 4 cloves
- 60 ml /2 fl oz gin



As usual, please remember to drink sensibly. Ed

Method

Add the ingredients, except the gin, to a pan and gently warm, dissolving the sugar.
Try not to let it boil.
If needed, adjust the sweetness to taste, by adding sugar.
Last of all, add the gin.
Fill your glasses, sit in front of the fire sipping the mulled wine and thinking of Christmas!

Recipe for Left Over Turkey Soup

After your Christmas dinner there is usually some left-over turkey. How about using some of this to make some soup. The recipe uses chicken stock. You could make your own turkey stock by boiling the turkey carcass, after stripping off the meat. I usually do this in a pressure cooker.

Ingredients

- 55g butter
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 sticks celery, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 25g plain flour
- 1.2 litres chicken stock (I use one of those little stock pots)
- 450g cooked turkey, skinned and shredded
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- salt and freshly ground black pepper



Method

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a medium heat then add the onions, celery and carrots and gently fry until they start to soften.
2. Stir in the flour and cook for 2 minutes. Add the chicken stock and bring the mixture to the boil, stirring as you do so. Season with salt and pepper, then reduce the heat until the mixture is simmering and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
3. Add the cooked turkey and cook until heated through. Adjust the seasoning, stir in the parsley and serve.

RHS Top Gardening Jobs for December

As we approach the shortest day of the year in December you will need work to keep you warm outside, such as digging and tree pruning. Hopefully there are not too many jobs left to do this year so you will have time for some fireside garden planning..

- Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place
- Check that greenhouse heaters are working
- Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing
- Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- Trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- Take hardwood cuttings
- Keep mice away from stored produce
- Reduce watering of houseplants



Find more details on the Royal Horticultural Society website
https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/in-month/december



RHS Top Gardening Jobs for January

January might be the middle of winter but as the days lengthen the garden starts to grow. Now is a great time to plan for the coming year and order seeds and plants. Enjoy the fresh air on and check your winter protection, stakes, ties and supports are still working after any severe weather. Put out food for birds, leave some garden areas uncut, a little longer, to provide shelter for wildlife.

- Prune apple and pear trees
- Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
- Keep an eye on watering houseplants
- Plant now to boost the winter fragrance in your garden
- Inspect stored tubers of Dahlia, Begonia and Canna for rots or drying out
- Keep an eye on fig and olive and guard against frost by covering with sacking or old fleece in frost
- Start forcing rhubarb
- Plan your vegetable crop rotations for the coming season
- Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
- Cut off hellebore leaves at the base to discourage black spot disease and show of the flowers

More details can be found on Royal Horticultural Society **website** https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/in-month/january

Χαίρετε - Greetings

Colin Gough

Two years ago I wrote about the Roman festival of Saturnalia, dating from the fifth century BCE and was seven days of feasting, gift giving and role reversals that started on the 17th December. (*Grafham Gossip 231, Dec 2024/Jan 2025, page 13)* I thought this year we would travel across the Mediterranean to fifth century BCE Greece and see if and how they celebrated around the winter solstice. As an aside, the word solstice comes from the Latin *solstitium*, which combines *sol* (meaning "sun") and *sistere* (meaning "to stand still" or "to halt") and refers to the the sun's north/south movement seems to pause at it's maximum point.

Χαίρετε (Chairete) - Greetings

It is the 17th December so the 12th day of the month Poseidon, and throughout the cities of Hellas the arrival of winter is marked by celebrations in honour of Dionysus, god of wine, revelry, fertility and ecstatic liberation. The days are short, the nights are long, and it is a time for feasting, drinking, music and merriment. In the spirit of Dionysus, ordinary conventions are relaxed. Wine flows freely, the sound of the aulos, a double flute, and lyre fills the air.



Men and women gather for symposia, where food, conversation, poetry and drinking are enjoyed in equal measure. What would ordinarily be considered excessive becomes, for a time, an expression of devotion to the god.

The symposium is much more than a drinking party. It is an opportunity for philosophical debate, storytelling, recitation of poetry and the testing of wit. Guests recline upon couches, crowned with wreaths of ivy or laurel, whilst slaves replenish the wine and serve delicacies. The wine is mixed with water in the great krater, for to drink it undiluted is considered the behaviour of barbarians rather than civilised Greeks.

Symposium scene on Krater, Nicias Painter, National Museum of Archaeology, CC BY 2.5, © Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons

Dionysian celebrations also provide an opportunity for the reversal of everyday order. During the festivals, theatrical performances bring gods, heroes, kings and fools to life. Comedy mocks the powerful, tragedy reminds us of the fragility of human existence, and all are invited to contemplate their place in the world. Gifts are exchanged, often small tokens of friendship, good fortune and hospitality. For the children there were toys and sweets.

As the year draws towards its end, I look forward to days of feasting, drinking, music, philosophical discussion and companionship.

It is not just drinking, singing and gift giving that our festive season enjoys, that is rooted in the past. There is a story, told by the first century BCE writer Strabo, which is the basis of one of our most well-known pantomimes. The word pantomime comes from the Greek *pantomimos* meaning "all-imitator" or "one who acts out all parts" (pan = all, everything and mimos = imitator, actor or dancer). In those days it used to be a masked actor who mimed all the parts and characters of a myth.

The Story of Rhodopis

Rhodopis was a beautiful young woman who was born in Thrace but was taken from her homeland and sold into slavery in Egypt. There she came into the service of a wealthy household. She was treated poorly by her fellow servants because of her beauty and gentle nature.

One day, whilst Rhodopis was bathing in the Nile, an eagle swooped down and snatched one of her delicate rose-coloured sandals. The bird carried it across the land and, by extraordinary chance, dropped it into the lap of Pharaoh Amasis as he sat administering justice.

Pharaoh was astonished by the sandal's beauty and the unusual manner of its arrival. Taking this as a sign from the gods, he ordered his messengers to travel throughout Egypt, searching for the woman whose foot would fit it.

After a long search, they discovered Rhodopis. The sandal fitted perfectly, and Pharaoh, believing the gods had guided him to her, took her as his wife.

Now, I wonder which pantomime this brings to mind!

May Dionysus bless your household, may your krater never be empty, and may the coming year bring prosperity and good fortune.

Χαίρετε καὶ εὐφραίνεσθε!
Chairete kai euphrainesthe!
Rejoice and be merry!



If you'd like to write a 'one-off' article or a regular feature for the Grafham Gossip, send it by email to: editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk



Send us your stories, events, recipes letters, photos and news. Thanks! Ed.

JEZ ASHCROFT LTD

All your decorating needs including:

Coving & Internal Decorating

FREE ESTIMATES



Please call: **07708 031493**

GAP Home Improvements

www.gaphomeimprovements.co.uk

Your local family-run home improvement company, specialising in windows, doors, garden rooms and roofline

For a free, no obligation quotation please contact Alex:
alex@gaphomeimprovements.co.uk
01480 219004

Cinnamon Bar and Indian Restaurant



Open 7 days a week
5pm to 10.00pm

01480 812211/811316

Thursday Night is **'Banquet Night'**
(Dine in only)
1 Starter, 1 Main, 1 Side.
Any Rice or any Nan **£20.95**
King Prawn £2.50 extra

Bar Special Offer
Drink and Starter **£9.95**
King Prawn or Mixed Kebab **£10.95**

https://cinnamonhuntingdon.co.uk

Could you help make tea?

Little Fishes Stay + Play sessions meet on Wednesday mornings in the Village Hall during term time.
If you can spare an hour, please join our tea rota!
Email: editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk

Community Notices

No charge if no profit is made:
Community Info, Free to good home, Help wanted.

Items For Sale: a donation towards printing costs, to reflect the size of advert/money made, if/when items are sold

Profit making events: a donation towards printing costs please, to reflect the size of the advert

For more details, email: editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk

For advice on how to maximise the energy efficiency of your home, save money on energy bills and cut carbon emissions go https://www.actiononenergycambs.org

action on energy CAMBRIDGESHIRE



Please get in touch if you can spare an hour or so to help clean the church, even if only now and then. We are desperately short of helpers.
Contact: editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk

The next deadline is 9.00am on Friday 15th January for the February 2027 issue. Send your contributions to: editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk Thanks, Ed.





Grafham Fireworks



A huge thank you from the Social and Fireworks Committee to everyone that came to watch the firework display, as well as everyone living in the village for your continued patience with the chaos that is caused for these couple of hours every year.

Also a massive thank you must go to all of our helpers who work so hard on the day to make this possible! They really are a brilliant team!

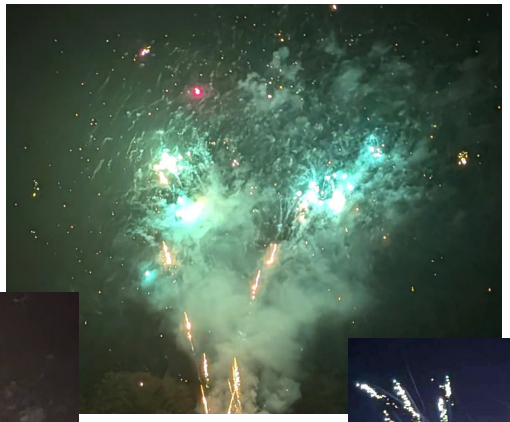
We look forward to seeing you all again in November 2027.

Grafham Social and Fireworks Committee

















Meet Father Christmas at St Neots Museum

12th and 19th December

Children can meet Father Christmas and his elves and receive a small gift; tickets are sold through the museum shop.

See: https://www.stneotsmuseum.org.uk/whats-on

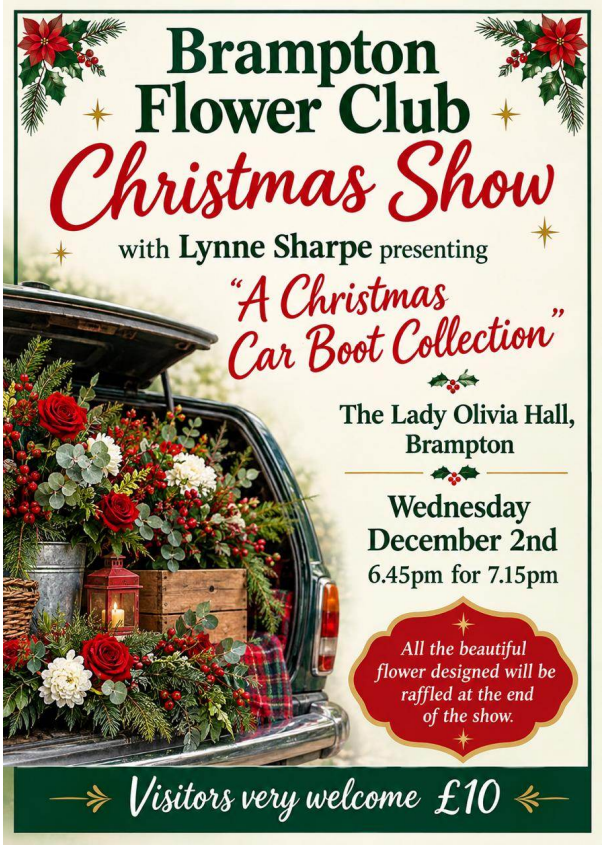


Christmas Concert

St Mary's Church, St Neots, PE19 2BU

Sat 12th December at 7:30pm

Hosted by St Neots Singers; tickets available via TicketSource. https://www.ticketsource.com/st-neots-singers/christmas-concert/e-ymqpkry



Christmas in Huntingdon

Huntingdon Christmas Lights

Saturday, 28th November 10:00am to 7:30pm
Huntingdon Market Square, Market Hill,
Huntingdon, PE29 3PJ

Lights switch-on at 6:00pm

Free community celebration organised by Huntingdon Town Council featuring live stage entertainment, community and charity stalls, Santa's Grotto, children's entertainment, fairground rides, and food and drink vendors.

Huntingdon Christmas Markets

Saturdays: 5th,12th, and 19th December
10:00am to 4:00pm
Huntingdon Market Square, Huntingdon Town Centre

Three festive Saturday markets featuring Christmas chalets with gift ideas alongside the regular Saturday market.

Christmas Extravaganza at Pepys House Brampton

Get creative this Christmas at Pepys

Monday 21st December
Gingerbread decorating at 1:00pm

Get into the festive spirit with a fun-filled gingerbread decorating workshop at Pepys House.

An hour of Christmas creativity as you decorate your very own gingerbread treats. Get imaginative with festive designs and enjoy some hands-on Christmas fun.

A lovely activity for families and children, and a chance to enjoy a little festive magic in the historic surroundings of Pepys House.

1:00pm gingerbread decorating booking link:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2003296920015

Monday 21st December 4.30pm
Christmas bauble decorating workshop

Join us in the Dairy for a festive bauble decorating workshop where you can create your own unique Christmas decoration to take home and hang on your tree.

Whether you prefer traditional Christmas colours, something sparkly or a design entirely your own, this is a lovely opportunity to enjoy some festive creativity.

Perfect for families and anyone who enjoys getting crafty at Christmas.

For details of other events see:
https://pepyshouse.org.uk/events/christmas



GRAFHAM CHRISTMAS LIGHT TRAIL

TO START PLANNING AND DESIGNING FOR YOUR OUTSIDE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS READY FOR OUR FIRST VILLAGE CHRISTMAS LIGHT TRAIL.

THIS WILL RUN FOR THE WEEK BETWEEN 12TH DECEMBER TO 19TH DECEMBER.

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON THE GRAFHAM VILLAGE FRIENDS FACEBOOK PAGE ON THE 19TH DECEMBER 2026.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST BY 27TH NOVEMBER

EMAIL GINA.CROWE07@YAHOO.COM
MOBILE: 07930 492241

1ST PLACE	
2ND PLACE	

Christmas Light Trail Voting Slip

Christmas in East Leightonstone

Saturday 28th November	Messy Advent See poster p.9	3.00pm - 5:00pm	Church Hall Brampton
Monday 14th December	Carol Singing	6:30pm	The Mermaid, Ellington
Tuesday 15th December	Curry & Carols See poster p.6	7:00pm	The Cinnamon, Grafham
Saturday 19th December	Carol Service	4:00pm	Grafham Church
Saturday 19th December	Carol Service	5:45pm	Ellington Church
Sunday 20th December	Carols on the Green	4:00pm	On the Green, Brampton (Methodist Church)
Monday 21st December	Carol Singing	6:30pm	The Institute, Brampton
Thursday 24th December	Crib Service	3:00pm	Grafham Church
Thursday 24th December	Carol Service	5:30pm	Brampton Church
Thursday 24th December	First Communion of Christmas	11:00pm	Ellington Church
Friday 25th December	Holy Communion	9:30am	Grafham Church
Friday 25th December	Holy Communion	11:00am	Ellington Church
Sunday 27th December	Said Communion	11:00am	Brampton Church

Church Services for December and January are listed on page 2

For a full list of services for all three churches visit: www.eastleightonstone.com and click on: 'See the Calendar for more'

Give Your Christmas Tree a Second Life!

Once the festivities are over, don't let your Christmas tree go to waste, recycle it and help it become something wonderful!

There are plenty of easy, eco-friendly ways to make sure your tree gives back to nature and your community.

Here's how you can recycle your tree:



- Kerbside Collection: Simply place your real Christmas tree next to your garden waste bin on collection day. If your tree is taller than your bin, please cut it in half.
- Household Recycling Centres: You can also take your tree to your local centre for recycling.

Support a Heartwarming Cause!

This year, we're proud to support East Anglia's Children's Hospices Christmas Tree Recycling.

Trees will be collected on 7th and 8th January 2027, and all donations will go directly towards caring for babies, children, and young people with life-limiting conditions, as well as supporting their families.

Register to have your tree collected and make a difference this Christmas: https://just-helping.org.uk/register-tree

Bin Collection Days over Christmas and New Year are on page 4

Household Recycling Centres

will close at 1.00pm on Christmas Eve and will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day

Visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk for more information.

Christmas at the Musicals Peterborough Cathedral

Tuesday 22nd December 7pm - 9pm

Featuring songs from Phantom of the Opera, Sound of Music, Wizard of Oz and more in the ultimate celebration of songs from stage and screen. No 1 selling classical soprano and star of The Voice UK, Nadia Eide is touring her brand new Christmas concert tour Christmas At The Musicals in November and December.

Experience one of the UK's finest classical singers as No 1 chart topping soprano and recent finalist of The Voice UK, Nadia Eide brings you a spectacular night of unforgettable music. Featuring well loved hits from the musicals with phenomenal arrangements from Les Miserables to Phantom of the Opera, this is a show you will not want to miss!

See https://peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/event/christmas-at-the-musicals

More events and Christmas Services: https://peterborough-cathedral.org.uk



Happy New Year!



Tea & Chat?



Do join us for our monthly
Tea & Chat
in Grafham Village Hall
All welcome. Refreshments are free!

Thursday 26th November 2:30 - 4:00pm
Thursday 28th January 2:30 - 4:00pm

There will be no Tea and Chat in December.

Season's Greetings to all!

For more details contact: ***Sandra* 07931 129772**

Grafham Trout



Winter Opening Times

Mon to Wed - Closed
Thurs – 18:00 - 22:00
Fri – 18:00 - 22:00
Sat – 14:00 - 22:00
Sun – 14:00 - 19:00

Open longer for special events
Bank Holidays – 14.00 - 19.00

The Mobile Library



Route H24 visits **Breach Road, Grafham from 10:10 to 10:35** on the **4th Wednesday of every month.**

For renewals and information call: **03450 455225**
or email: yourlibrary@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Cambridgeshire County Council www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Grafham Trout — Quiz night



Last Thursday of every month
Starting at 8pm
Teams of 4, £1 entry per person

There is no January issue

so send your news, views, photos, letters, adverts, notices, recipes and gossip for the February issue to:
editor@grafhamgossip.co.uk *by*
9:00am on Friday 15th January
Thanks, Ed.

Grafham Village Shop

01480 810119
Opening Hours
Mon to Sat 8:00am - 4:00pm
Sundays/Bank holidays 10:00am - 2:00pm

For Christmas Opening Hours see page 6

Shop News see Talking Shop page 5 and 6

facebook.com/GrafhamCommunityShop
admin@grafhamvillageshop.co.uk www.grafhamvillageshop.co.uk

East Leightonstone Parish - Brampton, Ellington, Grafham

Little Fishes

Stay + Play for 0 - 4 years
Grafham Village Hall
Wednesdays 10:00 to 11:30
Term time only
Just turn up on the day

Free play time followed by a short Bible story, action songs and simple craft.
Contact Jane Rowley **01480 890986**
littlefishes@eastleightonstone.com

Grafham Village Hall and Astro Court



For all reservations please use the online booking platform on the village website:
https://grafham.org.uk/village-hall-astro-pitch-booking/
or: https://bit.ly/3EJTTxn

Babysitting Services

Valarie, a friendly and trustworthy 14 year old in the village, offers babysitting for local families
Experienced with young children, reliable and caring
Evening, weekends and school holidays
Call, WhatsApp or text Valarie on
07946 032290

Friday Night Youth

If you are in secondary school or college, we would love to invite you to Friday Night Youth!

Join us for pool, table tennis, games, crafts, and refreshments, as well as the opportunity to meet young people from other churches and to explore the Bible together through fun activities

This group is delivered in partnership between Huntingdon Parish, East Leightonstone Parish and Huntingdonshire Community Church

We meet on alternating Fridays 6.45 – 8.15 at HCC, 83a High Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3DP

See the poster on page 8 for the dates

Please click here to complete the registration form.
Email Ruth Hunt for more information: ruth@huntingdonparish.org
We look forward to seeing you soon!

Opinions expressed in the Grafham Gossip, including past issues, are those of the writer and not the editors.

Printed by Peterborough Print 01733 639 234 www.peterborough-print.co.uk