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LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL

*PARISH COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER*



JANUARY 2011

Calor England Village of the Year 2008
and Anglia in Bloom Silver Award winner

www.levington.org

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Dear Villager - Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011 and a warm welcome to any new residents to our parish

MESSAGE FROM THE PARISH CHAIRMAN (David Long)



Well, Christmas and New Year celebrations are over, and hopefully everyone is well now after the season of coughs, sneezes and colds.

This is the newsletter edition where we hope you have already bought your 2011 diary or have been lucky enough to have one given you for Christmas because there are lots of events and dates to make a note of during this new year and you will find many of the 2011 programmes for our village organisations included. And here, I would like to add my thanks on behalf of all our readers to everyone in the village who make things happen and to those who support all the happenings. There is almost always something going on in Levington which is quite a feat in itself for such a small parish.

I'd like to also thank our county and district councillors who have supported and helped us on various issues during 2010. The parish council looks forward to supporting you the residents of Levington and Stratton Hall in the coming months and further enhancing village life and our environment. We are here to represent you. If you have any suggestions, concerns or complaints then contact either the parish clerk or any councillor and we will take appropriate action. Alternatively, please do come along to a parish council meeting where you will be made welcome and have the opportunity to raise any issues of concern at the Village Forum.

[David Long, Parish Chairman]



**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL AIM TO CUT OVER
50% OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUDGET
and MAKE CHANGES TO THE CONCESSIONARY BUS PASS SCHEME**

CONCESSIONARY BUS PASSES

From 1st April the concessionary bus passes are to be administered by the County Council and not Suffolk Coastal District Council. Central government will be providing the finance. Until now over 60s have been able to use their bus passes at any time. However, once the County Council take over the scheme they will be sticking to the National Statutory minimum scheme, i.e. free travel only from 09.30am on weekdays and all day on weekends and Bank Holidays.

Also from 1st April you will not be able to use your bus pass on the Ipswich Park and Ride services (incl. Martlesham) before 9.30am neither will single fare tickets be available on this service. However, Suffolk County Council has said it recognises that the Park and Ride services are an important part of the sustainable transport network for Ipswich. Therefore, from 1st April holders of a Free Travel Bus Pass will be able to buy a £1.50 return group ticket for the Park and Ride service but not until after 9.30am on Monday to Fridays and at any time at weekends and Bank Holidays. Before 9.30am you will be required to pay the full standard fare for the journey.

163 BUS SERVICE

As for our village 163 bus service you may have seen in the EADT that this was listed as facing the axe from 1st April and under review. I have been liaising with County Council officers and our County Councillor over this and have been pleased to learn that although the 163 service, as we currently know it, will be axed I have been assured that Levington and Nacton will retain a bus service. Currently, I am waiting to hear what this 'alternative' arrangement might be. As soon as it is known it will be published on our village noticeboards and in our March newsletter.

Cllr. Pat Pryke - Parish Transport representative



OPERATION STACK

The most recent meeting of the Operation Stack Steering Group for the long term solution for Stack took place on Tuesday 23 November 2010 at the Headquarters of Suffolk County Council [SCC] in Ipswich. This meeting was attended by David Long and David Pryke representing the Parish Council. The meeting is Chaired by SCC [they are responsible for the local roads], and attended by many others including the Highways Agency [a Government organisation responsible for the national trunk road network, including the A12 and A14], the police, Port of Felixstowe, the Road Haulers' Association, our District Council, and the Councils for Felixstowe and the Trimleys.

The previous Steering Group meeting had taken place on 25 February 2010, and was reported in the March Newsletter - Issue 41. Just a brief recap. SCC had reported on 5 possible options for permanent Stack:

- Innocence Farm - near the Trimley/Kirton Road
- 2 options around The Orwell Crossing Lorry Park
- 2 options involving Levington
- Container drop off area.

Following this meeting, the Parish Council had undertaken, in March 2010, an option appraisal of the 5 options, using the agreed criteria necessary for a permanent provision. We overwhelmingly came to the conclusion that the 2 Orwell Crossing options were the most suitable. We notified this to SCC and all the representatives on the Steering Group.

At the meeting on 23 November 2010, we expected a progress report of further work on all the options. Instead SCC reported on just the two options in Levington. Our Parish representatives, along with our SCC Member Patricia O'Brien, forcibly complained about the concentration on the Levington permanent options, and there being no reference whatsoever to the other options.

We were not given any explanation of why this had happened, but gained an assurance that SCC would undertake further preliminary work on all options.

However, it is very clear that there is no public money to spend on any provision for a permanent Stack [the estimated costs for the 2 Levington options are £1.8m and £5.5m, but neither offer the required capacity for HGVs, and less than the temporary arrangement]. Therefore, unless there is a better proposal for the temporary arrangements, they will remain in Levington, Stratton Hall and Nacton for the foreseeable future.

We have since written to all representatives of the Steering Group acknowledging this, but stating that further improvements need to be made for our residents, especially in severe winter conditions:

- Police escort through Stack
- High priority clearance of our back roads when Stack is imminent and/or in force

We have also stated that, in no way, should this be taken as our acceptance that permanent Stack be in our Parishes. Permanent Stack should contain the following among its features:

1. Not use a public road
2. Doesn't use valuable police time
3. Provide proper and civilized facilities for drivers
4. Doesn't spoil open countryside
5. Has the appropriate capacity for a high number of HGVs
6. Is on the eastbound carriageway of the A14

Of the 5 currently identified options, the Parish Council continues to firmly support the Orwell Crossing options for the permanent provision of Stack.



Parish Council Budget 2011/12

In the last Parish Council Newsletter, published in November we spoke of the budget process and the dilemma currently facing so many Councils and indeed other public bodies and commercial organisations. At times of economic stringency there are always pressures on services. Fewer resources are available but there seem to be more demands on them. However, we are very happy to be able to report that the Parish Council, at its January meeting, agreed to maintain the "precept", (i.e. that part of the Council Tax which comes to pay for local services provided by the Parish Council) at the current level for the coming financial year. This is the 7th year that the precept has remained unchanged. We have reviewed the likely expenses and we believe we can, despite some rising costs, maintain the present services without an increase for one more year.

We are still committed to enabling the extension to the Village Hall although we are aware there are a lot of hoops to go through in order to achieve this, particularly as we need to obtain grants and have the design agreed by the planners.



MONDAY MORNING COFFEE HOUR



Jo Wenham has reported that profits from the sale of home-made produce and coffee at last year's Monday morning coffee hour in the Village Hall have been put towards the purchase of an electric wheelchair for the St. Elizabeth Hospice and a new silver cup for the Levington Flower and Produce Show for 'The Best Rich Scones'.

LEVINGTON CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON CLUB



The wonderful cooks and helpers!

It was a full house in the Village Hall as once again the Luncheon Club was able to offer a Christmas dinner to all its members and invited guests. 51 folk attended for this special event. Other year's members and guests have enjoyed whole roast partridge and pear or other such gourmet delights! However, by popular request, Luncheon club members voted this time for the traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings and this was provided by the wonderful volunteer cooks. Turkey was followed by Len Wenham's renowned Christmas pudding and coffee was served with Helen's superb mince-pies. Wine and soft drinks were served with the meal. All for the cost of £5.00!

It is a compliment to all the cooks and helpers that all the meals arrived piping hot on the tables. They donned festive headgear for the occasion and the Village Hall had been decorated up with a Christmas Tree and trimmings.

This is always one of the much looked forward events of the year. As per previous years, the raffle table absolutely groaned with the weight of some wonderful prizes and not many people went home without one!

Thank you to everyone who made this event such a success - you are much appreciated!



LEVINGTON CHRISTMAS FILM EVENING

Illness and other commitments kept some people away on the night of the 7th December (which is why there has been a request to do a repeat showing on Saturday 29th January!) but nevertheless the Village Hall had a good crowd who appreciated the photography not only of Derek and David but also Sally and Bob who all contributed images to make this night a visual feast! The evening ended with a superb finale - an audio visual sequence with music of Levington snow scenes. The proceeds on the night were just over £160. More will be added to this amount at after the re-showing which will go towards Village Hall projects.



FELIXSTOWE AND DISTRICT SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM (SNT)

The next Community Panel of the SNT is at 6.00pm on Tuesday 25th January in Levington Village Hall. You are welcome to attend.

Currently the three local priorities being dealt with by Police are:

1. Tackling speeding and anti-social driving on Convalescent Hill and Sea Road, (Postcode IP11 2AG) - this priority was set on 20th April 2010
2. Educate and enforce parking regulations and usage of the Shared Space Scheme on Hamilton Road, Felixstowe (Postcode IP11 7BE) - this priority was set on 19th October 2010
3. Tackling anti-social behaviour in and around Langer Park, Felixstowe (Postcode IP11 2DR) - this priority was set on 20th July 2010.

ARMISTICE DAY - 11TH NOVEMBER 2010



[Brian Barker, Louise Overbury, Derek Girling and Colin Overbury]

It was hardly the quietest of two minute silences with the wind howling round the church and rattling the church door but nevertheless the intent of those attending the short Armistice Service at 11.00am on the 11th November at St. Peter's Church was, as always, dignified and thoughtful as they paused to remember those from Levington and Stratton Hall who lost their lives during war and others known to them and to mark the anniversary of Armistice Day when peace returned to Europe at the end of the First World War. The adverse weather forced the short service of prayers and reading to take place inside the church. This, possibly, for the first time ever but those attending were glad of the protection from the stormy elements outside especially the standard bearer who would have found it nigh on impossible to hold on to the flag in such conditions! Rev. Christopher Courtauld led the remembrance and the Royal British Legion locally was represented by villagers Max Ralph carrying the 'Standard' and Derek Girling. 32 people attended which was amazing given the weather on the morning and was probably the best attendance ever on a Levington Armistice Day.

At the end of the Remembrance, most were able to stay for a short time for a chat and a welcome cup of coffee provided by Rosanne Girling.



LEVINGTON LOCAL HISTORY CLUB
(Next Event)

BRIAN DYES

With an illustrated talk with slides on

'WHEELS OF IPSWICH - 200 YEARS'

[Brian is from Ipswich Transport Museum]

7.30pm THURSDAY 10TH MARCH
in the Village Hall

EVERYONE WELCOME

On the door £3.00 non-members
£1.00 Local History Club members
(to include refreshments)



**'THE NORMANDY BATTLEFIELDS' SLIDE
SHOW and THE VILLAGE POPPY APPEAL**

Despite the wild and windy day, a big thank you to those to made it to the Village Hall on the evening of 11th November to see the 'Normandy Battlefields' show put on by Derek Girling and Phil Owen. The proceeds from the evening, £130, have gone to the Poppy Appeal 2010 along with the proceeds of selling poppies in the village of £430.34 - making a grand total of £530.34. Special thanks to those who took on the job of collectors this time around.

***THANK YOU FOR HELPING THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY
APPEAL 2010***

LORRY DECIDES TO TAKE A SHORT CUT and gets stuck!



(Church Lane, Levington)

On the 20th December a driver of a container lorry decided he would take a short cut and use our back roads (perhaps he thought Operation Stack was on but it wasn't!). However, he came to an undignified halt causing Church Lane/Stratton Hall Drift to be completely blocked as his vehicle got stuck near Levington Hall trying to get up the hill on an icy road. The police had to close the area for some considerable time as the road needed gritting and the lorry required specialist removal to get it on the move again.

SUFFOLK COSTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTRONIC VIEWING OF COUNCIL TAX BILL

You may not be aware that a facility has been in place for several years whereby you can examine your Council Tax account on line and receive your Annual Council Tax bill electronically as well.

In order to register for this service you will need to go to the following web page:

<http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/counciltax/online/default.htm>



An invitation to everyone to take part in this year's Village Spring Clean

VILLAGE SPRING CLEAN

Arrive 9.30am outside the Village Hall
on **SATURDAY 26th MARCH**

PICK UP THE PIECES! You are invited to join in the event between 9.30am and 12 noon. Can you spare the time to lend a hand? We had a very good response last year and hope for an even better one this time! As usual, appropriate equipment is supplied. Gloves, high visibility waistcoats and litter pick grabbers will be available. So, however much (or little) time you can spare do come along. Simply turn up at the Village Hall at 9.30am where you will be given information on areas where litter needs to be collected and work together in pairs or more.

HOW ABOUT A DAY OUT TO ANGLESEY ABBEY?

Famed for its display of snowdrops the Levington Gardening Club has arranged a visit to Anglesey Abbey at Lode in Cambridgeshire for
FRIDAY 25TH FEBRUARY

There will be a snowdrop and Winter Garden guided tour. The restaurant will be open and the Mill opens at 11.00am. If a 16 seater coach could be filled the cost would be £16.00 per person, less if a larger coach was required. Entry to the Abbey on a group rate is £5.20 per person but National Trust and RHS members would have free entry. Please contact **Marian Rose as soon as possible on 659638** if you are interested in going or want further information.
ALL WELCOME.



VILLAGE HALL AGM - 24th November 2010

There were several absences from the Village Hall AGM meeting on 24th November and rather than cancel the meeting, the Treasurer Stephen Rackham took on the role of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer! It was noted that since the refurbishment of the Hall, creating a much nicer building, more hirings were being made. Probably, for the first year ever, the Treasurer could report that the operational costs are now covered by normal hire income without previously relying on fundraising or donations. But a word of caution - sufficient funding and a 'reserve' is needed to cover ongoing expenses such as maintenance, renewal of any equipment and for the proposed extension. Reviewing the hire rates it was decided to keep 'village bookings' at £15 a session and 'outside lettings' at £20 a session for the coming year.

After the busy Christmas period, Stephen Rackham and David Pryke will purposefully pursue outside funding for the proposed extension to the Hall. It was noted that the WI had recently donated a new kettle for the kitchen and the Flower Show committee had donated a sum of money to buy a few more chairs with arms. There are villagers who work hard behind the scenes to keep the Village Hall running smoothly. Our cleaner and grasscutter and the WI who continue to maintain beautifully the flower tubs outside the main door. And not forgetting Mary and David Wake our booking secretaries who keep an excellent booking system and who welcome new hirers, show them around and check things out after they have finished. Thank you all.

THE VILLAGE DIARY

Sunday 23 rd January	10.00am ALL AGE WORSHIP (St Peter's Church)
Saturday 29 th January	7.30pm Repeat showing of the ' CHRISTMAS LEVINGTON 2010 FILM SHOW (Village Hall)
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Sunday 30 th January	No service at Levington but Benefice Service at Kirton at 11.00am
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Sunday 6 th February	10.00am FAMILY HOLY COMMUNION (St. Peter's church)
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Tuesday 8 th February	12.30pm LUNCHEON CLUB (Village Hall) (Booked places only – contact Jo Wenham on 659509)
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Wednesday 9 th February	7.30pm WI (Village Hall) 'A Way with Words' with Janet Dunn
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Sunday 13 th February	3.00pm EVENSONG (St. Peter's Church)
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Sunday 20 th February	11.00am MORNING PRAYER (St. Peter's Church)
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Friday 25 th February	Proposed Gardening Club outing to Anglesey Abbey for snowdrop/winter garden guided tour. <i>[More details from Marian Rose]</i>
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Sunday 27 th February	10.00am ALL AGE WORSHIP (St. Peter's Church)
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Wednesday 2 nd March	7.15pm PARISH COUNCIL meeting (Village Hall)
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Sunday 6 th March	10.00am FAMILY HOLY COMMUNION (St. Peter's Church)
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Tuesday 8 th March	12.30pm LUNCHEON CLUB (Village Hall) (Booked places only – contact Jo Wenham on 659509)
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Wednesday 9 th March	7.30pm WI (Village Hall) 'Your Local Fire Service and Fire Safety in the Home'
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Thursday 10 th March	7.30pm LEVINGTON HISTORY CLUB (Village Hall) Illustrated Talk 'Wheels of Ipswich – 200 years'(Brian Dyes from Ipswich Transport Museum'

SUMMARY OF PARISH COUNCIL 18th JANUARY 2011

The Chairman welcomed the County Councillor and two residents to the meeting.

Councillor's Report (Mrs O'Brien).

Mrs. O'Brien reported on the way the County Council is in the throes of changing the way it does business looking to create a smaller County Council by divesting the delivery of services. It aims to build good relationships with the voluntary sector, charitable organisations and community groups. Mrs. O'Brien is a member of a workshop on Divestment. This group will scrutinise and assess those services that will be put forward for divestment. She mentioned the 'Big Society' offers the opportunity to think about running a service or linking up with other parishes to retain a service. One of the budget cuts proposed is to reduce verge cutting to one per year. If this was agreed then it would be up to parishes to make arrangements for a second cut for instance. Regarding draft proposals to withdraw the subsidy on our village bus Mrs. O'Brien gave assurance that the bus route serving Levington would be retained but the bus might operate at different times. On Police Authority matters, the budget gap for 2011/12 was a possible shortfall of £13m rather than £25m. *[Discussed at the meeting - public libraries across Suffolk could be closed to save money unless 'volunteers' come forward to take them on. The library service is considered by many to be an essential service and the suggested closure of libraries is giving public concern].*

District Councillor's Report (Mrs. Falconer).

Mrs. Falconer reported on the changes from 1st April relating to the concessionary bus pass scheme and the Park and Rides. She reminded parish councillors that any comments on the revised Local Development Framework should reach SCDC by 23rd January. *[Noted that an A5 leaflet explaining this had still not been distributed in this parish].* Mrs. Falconer mentioned the review of the Planning Department and the improvements made. She also promoted the 'Great Poppy Party Weekend' (10-12 June) where the Royal British Legion is encouraging individuals and groups to celebrate the Legion's 90th birthday.

Police Report

3 crimes were reported between 3rd November and 7th January. (1) between 17-24 November offenders forced entry into a yacht at the Marina and stole a GPS system, chart plotter, autopilot remote and four SD discs for Navman (2) during the early hours of 14th December offenders stole two engines from boats at the Marina and (3) between 11th and 18th December a boat trailer was stolen at the Marina but two weeks later found behind the toilet blocks with parts missing. Enquiries are ongoing on all three crimes.

Finance	Councillors reviewed actual v budget for 9 months to 31/12/10. This showed the forecast for the year was within their budgeted expectation. They agreed reduced expenditure on the donation budgets in 2011/12 in order to keep the precept at previous years' level but would review this by January 2012. Income and payments were noted and agreed. The Clerk's salary and expenses were agreed.
Local Development Framework	The parish council had until 23 January to make comments on the revised Local Development Framework (LDF). Last year, the Government implemented a number of changes which impact on the planning system. In particular regional targets for new homes are to be abolished and each council (for us Suffolk Coastal) must now decide how many new homes and jobs are needed in their area. The Revised Strategy lists major development at Martlesham and Felixstowe. Three sites offered in Levington have been deemed not suitable for development. The Parish Council approved a written response. <i>[Noted the District Council should have distributed to an A5 leaflet on this to every household in the Suffolk Coastal area but does not seem to have done so in Levington or some other areas].</i>
Operation Stack	A report on this is elsewhere in this newsletter. There is a new acting Police Inspector in charge of Stack. He is Inspector Julian Ditcham who is based at Felixstowe. The Parish Council has been able to comment on the Highways Agency 'diversionary routes'. If the A14 is closed due to a major accident/incident between Seven Hills and the Trimley junction then A14 traffic is diverted onto the Old A45 road at Levington or A12 to Foxhall roundabout and on via Brightwell, Bucklesham etc. This Parish Council has asked what would be the emergency diversion routing and implications should Stack be on at the same time. At the moment there does not seem to be a Plan B!

Planning Applications	(1)	C10/2820 - 'Seabreeze'. Bridge Road, Levington - Erection of single storey side & rear extension. <i>[Conditionally supported by the Parish Council. Approved by the District Council on 21/12/10.]</i>
Planning issues	The Parish Council is to raise with the District Council the issue of plans being changed without recourse to them.	
Postal delivery problems for Addresses on Bridge Road	Some residents in Bridge Road are having trouble with post deliveries because of duplication of numbering, e.g. 1-3 Red House Walk, 1-3 Walnut Tree Cottages mistaken for 1-3 Bridge Road and important post and documents have gone astray. The parish clerk had written to the Post Office Sorting office to seek advice and comments. In response the Delivery Office manager has confirmed he will do all that is required to ensure the mail is delivered correctly in future. Problems mainly occurred when a relief postman did the round. House owners will also be asked to help by having clearer house numbers etc.	
Correspondence	90 items of correspondence (written or emailed) were rec'd since the November Parish Council meeting - all efficiently dealt with by our Parish Clerk. Parish councillors particularly noted correspondence on the County Council budget cuts, the implications for certain services, the draft savings proposals and the drastic reduction (over 50% of budget) in subsidising public bus transport services.	
Councillor reports	Cllr. Pat Pryke reported on the latest situation on local bus services (more detail elsewhere in this newsletter). Cllr. Ruth Payce advised work still awaited to be started on local footpath - worked scheduled within two months.	
Village Emergency Plan	Noted the excellent response from residents to the Questionnaire. Cllr. Sharp collating all the information in readiness for the Emergency Plan Manual.	
Port of Felixstowe	The Port of Felixstowe Local Authority Liaison committee will be on 10 th March at the Port. Three Levington parish councillors will be invited to attend.	

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL IN ACTION - FLOODING ON NACTON ROAD Z BEND GOING OUT OF LEVINGTON

The Parish Clerk had contacted Suffolk County Council Highways department in an effort to ameliorate the flooding at this point in the road between Levington and Nacton. Highways contractors have now cleared the blockages in the spillway/kerb-off to allow the water to run away at this location. The problem had been made worse after mud and water came off the field during the harvesting of the potatoes. Workers also parking their cars by this bend caused the verges to be badly churned up. The Parish Council will write to Orwell Park estate to ask them if similar situations when harvesting could be prevented. If Highway's budget is cut then finance for remedial action may not be available in the future.



WANTED - A NEW VILLAGE RECORDER CAN YOU HELP? DO YOU LIKE KEEPING A DIARY/RECORDS?

For the past 32 years, residents Derek and Rosanne Girling have faithfully and diligently recorded the life of Levington as our 'Village Historical Recorders' and have over those years amassed a remarkable collection of monthly diary entries, nature notes, scrapbooks etc. A truly remarkable feat! But they now feel it is the right time for them to hand over this 'recording' to someone younger and wish to relinquish 'Recording' at the end of June. They aim to hand the 'Levington' records over to the Parish Council for safe keeping and for the benefit of generations to come. So ... we are now looking for someone who has the interest, the commitment and time to carry on with this valuable work. It would be a shame for the 'recording' to lapse. Derek will still keep the weather recordings going and would be more than happy to help any new 'Recorder' to get started. SO ... could you help? In the first instance, please speak to either Derek Girling or any Parish Councillor.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Beware of Bicycles! We all know that we should be aware of unfamiliar cars and vans cruising around our area on the lookout for possible opportunities for theft. Local police warn us that we should also be watching out for anyone looking suspicious on a bicycle. It is thought some of our local crime is committed by those on bicycles rather than in cars or vans. They come through the village looking for chances to do some quick thieving and make away silently onto our roads and footpaths on bicycles.

Suffolk Trusted Trader Scheme

Much has already been mentioned in Neighbourhood Watch reports about keeping safe from rogue traders and drawing attention to consumer's rights. The Suffolk Trusted Trader Scheme is operated by Suffolk County Council working with local businesses, helping consumers choose a provider based on information supplied directly by previous customers. The scheme is intended to increase consumer confidence, promote good practice and to help protect people from doorstep crime. Trusted Trader Schemes are operated by both Suffolk and Norfolk Trading Standards in partnership with Referenceline. Many businesses operate across both counties and links on the website will help in searching for firms that are members of the scheme

Also, Age UK (Suffolk) has additional information on services to help older people at home, including help with shopping, odd jobs, cleaning and care services. Age UK has details of local low cost sources of help with gardening and small repairs to the home. **Contact details:** Age UK (Suffolk) Domestic Helpline 0845 330 0470 (open 9.30am to 12.30 Mon. to Thurs.), or email: office@ageuksuffolk.org All the above information and links can be found on the Suffolk Trusted Trader website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader

NB Suffolk County Council point out that the scheme does not in any way endorse or provide a warranty on the status of an individual business/trader on the website.

[Contributed by Bob Hardwick Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator]

LEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE AGM

"Annual General Meeting" often brings groans of dismay! And the remark "Oh, I don't think I shall go"? But attendance at an AGM is really a mark of respect for the Committee and the work they have done over the year and also, a measure of support the members are prepared to give in the year to come. So it was encouraging to see members out in the Village Hall for the AGM despite some being away through illness or holidays. Members voted in en-bloc the President, Pat Owen and the rest of the members on the current Committee who were prepared to stand again. Diane Willsted, the secretary, was absent on the night due to a illness but she was thanked for all the hard work she puts in year in year out to provide such a varied, interesting and excellent programme. There was one change however. After 28 years of loyal accounting, Rosanne Girling has stepped down from being WI Treasurer although will remain a committee member. Members thanked and applauded Rosanne for her sterling work. Marian Rose has now taken over as Treasurer and she and Rosanne were able to report that the past year's accounts had been audited as correct.



Rosanne receiving a gift on relinquishing the office of WI Treasurer



LEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

This year is the 50th year since Levington WI has been in existence. During the year the group will celebrate this achievement and its special golden anniversary. You will find below an excellent variety of speakers that our secretary Diane Willsteed has so ably put together for us. Do come and join us if you can. Visitors and new members always welcome.

The 2011 programme for Levington WI is:

- 12th January - 'Golden themed' party and sit down meal celebrating 50th year of Levington WI
- 9th February - 'A way with words' (with Janet Dann)
- 9th March - 'Your Local Fire Service & Fire Safety in the Home' (with Gary Fry and Mark Cooper)
- 13th April - 'Farming Heritage & the Evolution of Farm Retail' (with Oliver Paul)
- 11th May - 'Resolutions' meeting (when we listen, discuss and debate important issues and competition)
- 8th June - 'Town Crier' (with Robert Needham)
- 13th July - Summer Buffet at the 'Felixstowe Hut' (another 50th anniversary celebration)
- 14th September - 'The Heart of Ipswich' (with Ann Day)
- 12th October - 'Catering the Royal Way' (with Patrick Thompson)
- 9th November - AGM and display of W.I. Memorabilia
- 14th December - 'Around the World on a Scooter' (with Ted Wheatley)

All meetings are on Wednesday nights and start at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

For more information or any queries, you can contact Pat Owen (President) on 659331; or Diane Willsteed (Secretary) on 659257.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS



Each week a group of home-educating families from around Suffolk meet in Levington village hall. With children aged from 1 to 11, they engage in a variety of activities including music, craft, art, history, science and games. In December, to celebrate their first year together, the group brought the magic of Christmas to the village with their Nativity show. The children designed and painted the set, worked on the script and practiced Christmas music together. Despite heavy snow, the hall was packed as they performed their show for parents, grandparents, friends and villagers. There was bell ringing, solo performances on guitar, violin and glockenspiel, and the traditional Christmas story.

The afternoon finished with carols and mince pies for everyone. Thanks to all who came for making it such a special occasion!



2011 CENSUS

The last census undertaken for England and Wales was in 2001. **The next one takes place on Sunday 17th March 2011.**

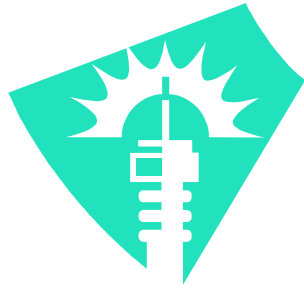
- The census matters to everyone who lives in our area.
- Census population estimates underpin the planning and funding of public services throughout England and Wales. Getting the best possible response rates for the census will make sure these allocations are based on accurate, high quality data
- Census information is strictly confidential: personal information is protected by law

When the last census was done there was an overall return rate of 94% which was excellent. However, some communities recorded lower returns, with a potentially adverse effect on their central government funding.

Did you know the amount of public service funding your County Council and Primary Care Trust gets from the Government is based on the number and characteristics of the people who live in the area? Thus the census needs to include everyone to help make sure they receive sufficient funding to provide the services our residents need.

The government will advertise the census in the press and on Radio and TV to encourage you to complete your census form returns when you receive them. Their census staff will follow up any not received. Your Parish Council would also like to encourage you to take the trouble to complete the questionnaire.

YOU WILL BE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE YOUR CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE on or as soon after the date of SUNDAY 27TH MARCH 2011. Make a note of the date



DIGITAL CHANGEOVER

Help is at hand to switch to digital TV

TV is changing. In 2011 the traditional TV signal will be switched off in the Anglia region and replaced with a digital TV signal. This is not a concern for most people but some may find it harder to make the switch than others.

The Switchover Help Scheme has been set up by the Government and is run by the BBC. Its purpose is to make digital TV easy for older and disabled people by converting one of their televisions to digital in the run-up to digital TV switchover in their region. People living in the Suffolk area served by the Ipswich Stoke transmitter will begin to switch on 06 July 2011.

What does the Help Scheme do?

The Switchover Help Scheme aims to reach out to all eligible people, and ensure that those who need help get it, so that no-one eligible need be left behind without access to television after switchover.

People are eligible for help if they are:

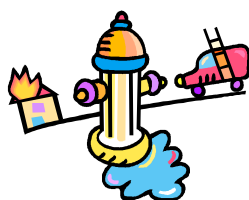
- aged 75 or over,
- have lived in a care home for six months or more,
- get or could get, disability living allowance,
- attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement,
- Or if they are registered blind or partially sighted.

For more information on the Help Scheme visit www.helpscheme.co.uk

THE OLD A45 ROAD DIVERSIONARY ROUTE USED

On Saturday 15th January, tragically a 22 year old male pedestrian on the A14 between Seven Hills and the Brightwell and Kirton turn off was killed after a serious collision with a lorry. The A14 between those two points was closed for several hours whilst the police and the collision investigation team investigated the scene.

This fatal accident meant the Highways Agency diversionary route came into force. At Seven Hills traffic either diverted onto the Old A45 at Levington and then down the slip road to Trimley or northwards up the A12 to the Foxhall roundabout and routed towards Felixstowe from there. A lot of the A14 traffic used our old A45 road at Levington. This Parish Council only recently raised the question with County Council officials and Highways Agency personnel on the implications of an A14 emergency diversion routing in this area if it should occur at the same time as an Operation Stack. Review ongoing.



VILLAGE EMERGENCY PLAN 55 HOUSEHOLDS RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE

In the November issue of this newsletter we reported that we had received 42 questionnaire forms back from residents which was a great initial response. Since then we have received even more. Currently 55 households in the parish have responded. So, again a big thank you to all of you who have taken the trouble to complete the questionnaires. By the way, there is still time for you to complete the form if you haven't had chance to do it so far. Just hand your completed questionnaire to any Parish Councillor.

Progress can now be made with the compilation of an Emergency Plan for the village with Cllr. Linda Sharp starting the process of collating all the information so far received.

LEVINGTON WI REACHES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY!



The Women's Institute meeting on Wednesday 12th January was less of a meeting (although some business was done!) but more of a celebration. Levington WI had reached its 50th anniversary having been founded in 1961. To mark this special year members toasted the success of all those years with a glass of hot cider punch before enjoying a 3-course meal with drinks. The tables were beautifully decorated on a gold theme and Jean Shipp had provided the floral gold and green centrepieces.

The President read out a letter of congratulations from our local MP, Therese Coffey. *'Best wishes to you and all your members of Levington Women's Institute on reaching your 50th anniversary. I hope that you enjoy a super golden anniversary/birthday meal. The WI has always played a key role across our country and I noted your contribution to the village winning an Anglia in Bloom Silver Award with your planted containers (outside the Village Hall). Congratulations once again and here's to another 50 years! Therese Coffey.'*

Later in the year, more celebrations will include a summer buffet with invited guests, then a 'golden' Flower Festival weekend at the end of June in the church and the Sunday service with a WI theme. Towards the end of the year an outing is being considered to Fellbrigg Hall in Norfolk for a Christmas seasonal visit.



**The FELIXSTOWE FLYER publication
and more publicity for Levington**

Back in September, the Parish Council received a request from Adrian Bradshaw of the 'Felixstowe Flyer' for Levington to feature in the 'Flyer' by providing a monthly article which would go in the 'Town and Country' section of this free publication. He thought it would be good to let people living in Felixstowe and the surrounding area to know what's going on in Levington. Well ... we rather agreed and always up for a challenge and gluttons for taking on yet more work, the Parish Council said 'yes'! Pat Pryke volunteered to write the monthly article not short of material from writing the village newsletters! 300 words were asked for but she persuaded Adrian that she could fill 400! Her first article appeared in the November issue of the 'Felixstowe Flyer.'

At one time every household in the parish used to receive this 'Felixstowe' paper but we have not done so for quite a while now. Pat has arranged for a supply of the papers to be delivered every month and she will place them in the Village Hall where anyone can take a copy. If you can't get hold of a copy you can read the publication on-line by accessing www.flyeronline.co.uk and clicking on the 'Felixstowe Flyer' icon.

WANTED - wood chippings

Wanted ... some good 'wood-chip' to replenish some flower beds in the Churchyard. Could you help? If so, please contact Ian Angus on tel. 659249. Thank you.



PARISH COUNCIL DATES FOR 2011/2012

The Parish Council has now fixed its meeting dates for the coming year as follows:

2011

Tuesday 18th January

Wednesday 2nd March

Wednesday 6th April (Annual Parishes Meeting)

Tuesday 10th May (This will be the first meeting after the
the parish council elections likely to take
place on Thursday 5th May)

Wednesday 6th July

Wednesday 7th September

Tuesday 8th November

2012

Wednesday 18th January

ANNUAL PARISHES MEETING



For those village organisations and others who give a report at the Annual Parishes meeting please note this year it will be held as a separate meeting from a Parish Council meeting and is to be held on Wednesday 6th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.



THE SAILING TRUST HAS HIT THE JACKPOT AFTER AN EXCITING LOTTERY FUND WIN OF £50,000!

Volunteers at the East Anglian Sailing Trust based here in the village at the Suffolk Yacht Harbour are thrilled to have won £50,000 in the November ITV's programme *'People's Millions'* after a huge phone-in vote by viewers.

The *'Peoples Millions'* is a partnership between the Big Lottery Fund and ITV. The Levington group run sailing trips for able-bodied and disabled sailors and the Trust aims to put the money towards a new waterside community centre at the Marina. Their current warehouse on the marina has outgrown its purpose, which has been used for boat storage, maintenance, teaching, socialising and as changing facilities.

The Trust members hope their new waterside centre will let them expand their activities to include wildlife-watching as well as accommodating their growing waiting list of new people wanting to join.

They have a large number of members and a team of 74 volunteers with the aim of enabling those people with a range of physical and learning disabilities the opportunity to take part in sailing 19ft keelboats. WELL DONE to everyone at the Trust. We know how much hard work goes on behind the scenes to put a successful bid together.

From the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing Benefit is changing from April 2011 for tenants renting in the private sector. Do you get Housing Benefit or are making a new claim for Housing Benefit for a private tenancy? Find out how the new changes will affect you. Go to www.direct.gov.uk or speak to your local authority Housing Benefit department.



LEVINGTON GARDENING CLUB PROGRAMME FOR 2011

Do put these dates in your diaries. Come and enjoy another Gardening Club year with interesting speakers, demonstrations and outings. All meetings start at 7.30pm in the Village Hall unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday 19 January

'All things Fruit Trees' with Graham Proctor from Crown Nursery

Friday 25 February

Visit to Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire, to see the snowdrops

Wednesday 16th March

'Garden Design/Bed in a Box' with Jane Hamlin, Land Army Designs

Wednesday 18th May

'Garden Crime Prevention' with Pc Paul Smith

Wednesday 15th June

Visit to Scotts Research Station in Levington

Saturday 16th July

Levington Flower and Produce Show (start time 3.00pm)

Wednesday 21st September

'Roses' with Simon White

Wednesday 16th November

'Baskets and Container Gardening for Winter' with Peter Chinery

Further information can be obtained from:

Marian Rose (01473 659638) or Caroline Young (01473 659547)



*By popular request
A REPEAT OF THE
CHRISTMAS FILM SHOW*

DID YOU MISS IT FIRST TIME AROUND IN DECEMBER?
Then, by popular request, there is to be a re-showing of the
'2010 Levington' film show by Derek and David at
7.30pm SATURDAY 29TH JANUARY
in the Village Hall

Come and see pictures of life in Levington during 2010 and a
stunning finale of Levington snow scenes set to music at the
end! Not to be missed! Tickets £3.00 on the door to include
refreshments. **ALL VERY WELCOME** to attend.



AND FINALLY ...The hazards of delivering the newsletters to you!

Have you heard the one about the newsletter deliverer who lost his posh I-Phone in the village whilst delivering some of the newsletters to you? Having searched with his wife in the dark during the late afternoon and the evening with a large torch to no avail he did another trawl at first light the next morning. Nothing! Then decided to do one more investigation - started to retrace his footsteps to every house that he had delivered a newsletter to and BINGO he found the phone in the grass up Tony Pomroy's drive! It had lain out all night in the cold and the rain but amazingly was still working when he tried it. A mightily relieved Parish Chairman!!!!

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*The next
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING*

*is in the Village Hall on
WEDNESDAY 2nd MARCH 2011*

*[pre-agenda forum between
7.15pm-7.30pm]*

[Council meeting from 7.30pm]

[Open Forum at the end]

[ALL WELCOME]

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PARISH COUNCILLOR DETAILS

David Long (Chairman) 659342
David Pryke (Vice-Chairman) 659554
Ian Angus 659249
Nick Hopkins 659273
Ruth Payce 655535
Pat Pryke 659554
Linda Sharp 659771
Parish Clerk - Marian Rose 659638

Mrs. Patricia O'Brien (County Councillor & District Councillor) 01394 448228
Mrs. Veronica Falconer (District Councillor) 01394 448263

Village Hall Bookings (David and Mary Wake) (01473) 659627
Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator (Bob Hardwick) (01473) 659631
Area Police Beat Officer Pc Paul Smith (01473) 613500
Safer Neighbourhood Team/Sgt. James Harper (01473) 613500

*Published by Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council
[Member of SALC -the Suffolk Association of Local Councils]*