Issue 138 December 2026 / January 2027

Local news from Cold Ashby, Cottesbrooke, Creaton, Guilsborough, Hollowell, Teeton & Thornby
www.villagelink.org.uk



Double delight in Thornby

Congratulations to the Red Lion team and Thornby Farms who were both celebrating wins at this year's Weetabix Food and Drink Awards. Alfie Gravett has done the pub proud, winning Young Chef of the Year. And Peter Moyes from Thornby Farms collected the Gold Award in the Farming Environment Category, and was pleased to receive a letter of congratulations from local MP Stuart Andrew (see page 19).



"Congratulations to our chef Alfie Gravett of Spratton, on winning Northamptonshire's Food and Drinks Award for Chef of the Year 2026. Alfie has been at The Red Lion Thornby since 2022 and has completed his Professional Chef qualification at Northampton College before starting full time with us in 2024. He has developed into a confident and knowledgeable chef with work experience placements at Joesph Morris Butchers, South Kilworth and Michelin starred Galvin la Chapelle, London. We hope he continues to grow and learn as a chef and look forward to working with him and seeing his chef journey continue. Chapeau Chef!"
Simon, Louise and the Red Lion team

Steam-powered generosity



Eve Wooldridge from the Village Link team was delighted to collect a donation towards our printing costs from Hollowell Steam's treasurer, Carrie Sherlock. Hollowell Steam has raised an amazing £2 million for local good causes since it started! Full story on page 17.

CAN YOU SOLVE OUR FESTIVE PUZZLE?

We have placed nine images throughout the newsletter. Collate the first letter of each object then rearrange them to spell something Christmassy. Good luck!
You will find the answer online at villagelink.org.uk after it has been updated at the end of the month.



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What's On

DECEMBER

See back page for details of Carol Services around our churches.
See p.4 for all Cold Ashby Events
3rd Guilsborough Friends
5th Hollowell Cafe Christmas
5th Cottesbrooke Coffee Morning
6th Guilsborough Light for a Loved One
11th Guilsborough Pop up Pub
12th Creaton Walkers
14th Guilsborough Xmas Party MMM
17th Creaton FOSM History
19th Hollowell Hopewell Cafe
22nd Creaton Singers Carol Concert

JANUARY

See p.4 for all Cold Ashby Events
9th Creaton Walkers
14th Guilsborough Friends
21st Creaton FOSM History
22nd Hopewell Cafe Hollowell
29th Guilsborough Gmads

AND REGULARLY ...

- Monday mornings: Guilsborough MMM
- Tuesdays: Guilsborough Pilates, Yoga & Tennis (pm), Creaton Singers
- Thursdays: Creaton Indoor Bowls; Guilsborough Yoga, NIA & Badminton
- Fridays: Guilsborough Time to Move
- Sundays: Guilsborough Tennis; Cottesbrooke Soul Yoga

Copy deadline for the February/March edition: Wednesday 6th January

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COMPASS ENERGY

Trevor Reay

From 1983, Trevor developed a local oil distributor in Brixworth alongside Tony Watson. After a change of ownership, Trevor decided it would be wise to leave that company in May 2018. Two years later in September 2020 an opportunity came along. Trevor came out of an early retirement and locally started Compass Energy.

Our vision is to build an old-style local fuel distribution. Since 2022, Trev has now been joined by his long-standing ex-colleagues, Jess McClorey, Ian Taylor & Ruth Threadgold in our Sywell office.

WHY CHOOSE COMPASS ENERGY?

- Local depot - ready supply
- Local drivers - quick deliveries
- Local office - direct contact
- Competitive pricing - buy direct



VILLAGE LINK

is a bi-monthly publication delivered free of charge to households in Cold Ashby, Cottesbrooke, Creaton, Guilsborough, Hollowell, Teeton and Thornby. It is produced and distributed by volunteers. Due to restrictions of time and space there is no guarantee that copy submitted will be used. All funds received from advertising go towards printing costs.

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Wherever possible please email your contributions to: editorial@villagelink.org.uk. This saves considerable time re-typing information! When providing hard copy materials, please post to Sarah Dalzell, Five Springs, Nortoft, Guilsborough, NN6 8QB

Advertisements are welcome from local businesses, charities, clubs and societies. Commercial businesses pay advertising rates. One insertion: full page, £140, half page £70, quarter page £35, eighth page £20.
Two or more insertions: full page £120, half page £60, quarter page £30, eighth page £15. All prices are per insertion. Colour available in some issues, price on application. Private ads are also welcome. Back page 'lineage' cost £1.50 per line. Please contact Sarah Dalzell to book advertising or email: advertising@villagelink.org.uk. Cheques payable to 'Village Link'.

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY/MARCH EDITION: WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY.

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COUNCILLOR NEWS

News from Cllr Christine Ware



Hello everyone

It's soon got to the time to change the clocks and get out the Winter jumpers!

With prices rising and temperatures dropping, the Government's Winter Fuel payments are back. If you were born on or before 27 June 1960 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills for winter 2026 to 2027. Most people get the Winter Fuel Payment automatically if they are eligible. If you are entitled to receive the payment then you will get a letter this month (unless you've already had confirmation in October confirming what your payment will be). Payments are likely to be made in November and December.

If your income is over £35,000 per annum then you won't be entitled. Your partner's income is not taken into account. You can opt out of the Winter Fuel Payment if you wish and information on how to do this can be found on the Government website www.gov.uk.

For anyone receiving pension credits or in a low-income household then there is a Warm Home Discount of £150 applied directly to your electricity bill. You don't need to do anything, your electricity supplier will discount your bill if you are eligible.

There are other support packages available, for example the Cold Weather Payment for people on certain benefits or support for mortgage interest. You'll get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, 0°C or below over 7 consecutive days. Eligible people will receive £25 for each 7-day period of very cold weather between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2027.

You don't need to apply for these but you may need to report a change in circumstance if you have a baby or a child aged under 5 years comes to live with you.

West Northants Council manages the Crisis and Resilience Fund for the Government (CRF). The West Northants Council website has further information about what may be available to you and, if you have internet access you can find out more at: https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/food-household-and-everyday-essentials/crisis-and-resilience-fund-crf

The local West Northants libraries also have information available if you need to access information and don't have internet access.

As always, please do get in touch if you have issues to raise or if I can help at all - my contact details are below.

With kind regards
Christine
Christine Ware
Ward Councillor for Naseby
e: christine.ware@westnorthants.gov.uk
e: christine@wnld.org.uk
Tel: 07836 368888





News from the Memorial Hall

Charity Skittles Night



Thank you to everyone who joined us on Saturday 26th October for our charity skittles night. This year our chosen charity was The British Legion Poppy Appeal as our hall is a Memorial to those who served and fell during the world wars. Four teams, totalling 20 players battled it out in a fun, competitive evening until one team, 'The Spades', were crowned champions. A total of £100 was raised. Thank you to Mandy Carson, Gemma Sellers, Carole Oliver, Fiona Gunn-Stokes, Andrew Bott and Ann Brumby for their help with the evening.

St Denys Church News

Harvest Supper
Thank you to everyone who attended our Harvest Supper at the end of October. Over 40 people enjoyed a meal of casserole and crumble, followed by an auction of produce led by Simon Cotton. The PCC are very grateful to everyone who helped make this event a great success. All monies raised will go to St Denys Church.

Lighting of the Remembrance Tree
The Tree of Remembrance will once more be lit throughout December to remember those are no longer with us. To buy a bulb costs £5 and villagers will receive a form through your door which will need to be returned to Will Benney by the beginning of December.



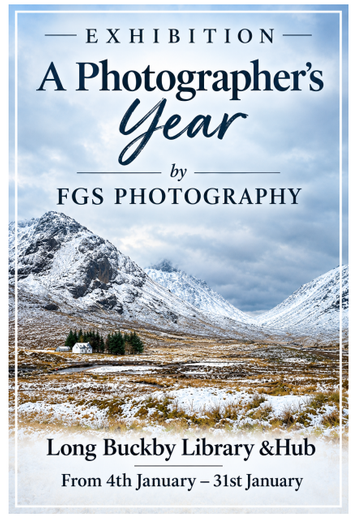
Cold Ashby Events for December and January

Everyone is welcome to join us for the following events and residents' support will ensure that we are able to keep these important village facilities open and provide opportunities for entertainment, social interaction and keep the village pool and skittle teams going.

Pool nights some Mondays from 7.30pm at the Cold Ashby Playing Field Pavilion.

Bar open. Please see village Facebook pages for more details.

Date	Event	Place	Details
Sat 5th Dec	Tree Lighting	St Denys Church	6pm
Wed 9th Dec	Skittles CA v KA	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm
Sat 12th Dec	Carol Service	St Denys Church	5pm
Sat 12th Dec	Christmas Cracker	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm (poster)
Sun 20th Dec	Sunday Cafe	Memorial Hall	9.30 - 11.30am
Thurs 24th Dec	Christmas Eve Social	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm
Thurs 31st Dec	New Year's Eve Social	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm
Wed 13th Jan	Skittles CA v LBFC	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm
Wed 20th Jan	Skittles CA v LBRC	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm
Sun 24th Jan	Sunday Cafe	Memorial Hall	9.30-11.30am
Sat 30th Jan	Bingo Night	Memorial Hall	from 7.30pm (poster)



Cold Ashby Memorial Hall Sunday Cafe
Join us for breakfast between 9:30-11:30am.
Sunday 20th December and Sunday 24th January
Bacon, sausage, egg rolls, toasties and cakes available to eat in or takeaway.

COLD ASHBY NEWS



News from the Memorial Hall

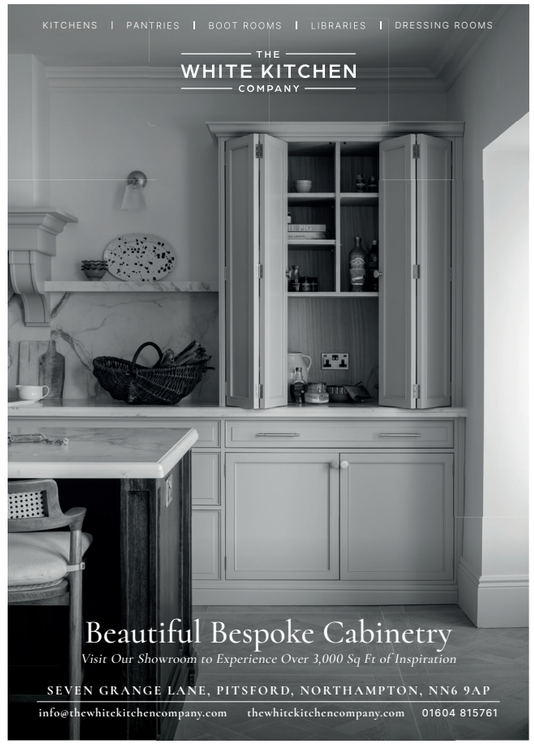












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December & January in the Kitchen Garden



I have been dipping back in to Susan Campbell's book *Cottesbrooke: An English Kitchen Garden*. For those few of you who do not know it, the book was published in 1987 as a result of Susan's quest to find an old-fashioned walled kitchen garden. This was also the time of the BBC television series *The Victorian Kitchen Garden* which sparked a great interest in how things were done then and whether they were still done that way in the 1980s.

Susan visited Cottesbrooke at monthly intervals and her book is part diary, part record of how to grow and tend plants for food and flowers. On her December visit, a cold, frosty but bright day, she found the peaches and nectarines pruned and sprayed, and had a discussion about the merits - or not - of growing figs in the same glasshouse. Elsewhere, winter lettuce and cauliflowers were growing in the vinery borders, and leeks, onions, swedes, parsnips and beetroots were being scrubbed and made presentable in the wash room next to the fruit store.

For the first two weeks of January 1985, the temperature rarely made it above freezing and on the 17th it fell to -14C. It was apparently so cold that the glass on the stove and palm houses froze over. However, if you think the variety of weather we have now is different, by the end of the month it was so mild, the glasshouses had to be vented during the middle part of the day.

December was a time of receiving seeds for the new season and January was for planning, and, by the end of the month, sowing many of them - 24 varieties during the last week alone, most of which were flowering plants for the borders. I expect vegetables had been started as well; nowadays the RHS recommend we plant onion sets, garlic, shallots, and broad beans - and perhaps the weather might be kinder this forthcoming year that the last one.

Bandhu

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COFFEE MORNINGS

On Saturday 5th December Meg is kindly hosting the coffee morning at the village hall. Open to all it is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with fellow villagers over a slice of cake and a cup of tea. We are always looking for volunteers to host future coffee mornings, if you can help then please contact Sally/Holly to discuss further.

SUNDAY YOGA AND MONTHLY SOUND BATHS

Each Sunday there is Soul Yoga with Sara at the village hall between 10am & 11am and once a month Sara also hosts a crystal healing sound bath which promotes deep relaxation using calming frequencies and soothing tones. For more information or to book in please contact Sara on 07765 255460

COTTESBROOKE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

On Saturday 19th December at 1pm it is the annual carol service at All Saints Church. Lesson readers are eagerly sought, if you are able to help, please contact Ian McRae on 07831 684940.

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CREATON NEWS

Creaton Walkers



L-R Mary-Anne Constable, Peter Barnes, Pippin, Jane Chant, Avril Palmer, Jane Kimberlin and Treacle.

Despite recent adverse weather the Creaton Walking Group have been able to get out and about and enjoy the beautiful autumn. The October walk from West Haddon to Winwick, Elkington, Honey Hill and back was very picturesque - see photo. The group were delighted to have a new potential member and dog join them.

Later in the month 2 of the walkers went walking in the Sierra de Tejeda in Spain, between the Andalusian and Sierra Nevada mountains, see photo, and were rewarded by spotting several wildlife.



Jane Kimberlin (left) and Lisa Ingram on the Sierra de Tejeda

The December walk will include a festive lunch, where the walkers welcome their supporters to join them.
Next walks are on

- Saturday 12th December
- Saturday 9th January
- Saturday 13th February

Meet at Creaton lychgate at 10am prepared for the weather.
Well-behaved dogs welcome.
The Creaton Walking Group wish all Village Link readers a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year and hope to see you out walking with us soon.

Creaton WI

As another year draws to a close our Craft Group is busy creating hand-made items for Christmas Fairs and we are all looking forward to a wide variety of interesting speakers in 2027.

On January 13th Mark Temple's talk is "The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie".

On February 10th local author and historian, Helen Frost, will make a welcome return visit, this time on "Convalescing at Cottesbrooke Hall" - how the hall opened its doors during the Great War to care for soldiers. Do join us to find out more about a local country house that you have probably visited!

Meetings are held in the URC at 7.30 p.m. and everyone is welcome. Please just come along or, for more information, contact President, Daphne Clark, 01604 505546 or email wicreaton@gmail.com

Creaton Singers



Thank you so much to everyone who came to the Creaton Singers concert in September in aid of MND (Motor Neurone Disease) Northants Branch. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and £830 was raised for MND, which is an incredible amount. Lindsay Cave very kindly photographed the event (above) and has since joined the Creaton Singers! If you are curious about joining, come along to a taster session. We meet on Tuesdays from 7.30pm to 9pm in the URC on Creaton High Street.

Christmas is almost upon us so why not come and hear your local singing group raise the roof with festive cheer! The Creaton Singers are delighted to be invited back to Welford Christmas Tree on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th December from 2pm to 3.30pm so do come and hear us whilst buying your Christmas Tree. On Saturday 19th December at 1pm the Creaton Singers are taking part in the Carol Concert at Cottesbrooke Church.

Our Annual Christmas Carol Concert will take place on Tuesday 22nd December starting on the Green in Creaton at 7pm with Carol Singing. This will be followed by a Concert in the URC at 7.30pm. There will be a bucket collection for Thomas's Fund, a music therapy charity. We look forward to seeing you and celebrating Christmas with you.

St Michael & All Angels

The PCC would like to thank everyone who came to listen to the wonderful Belcanto Choir on 10th October, part of the celebrations for the 800th Anniversary of the first recorded Rector of Great Creaton in 1226. We were treated to an afternoon of absolutely enchanting music and varied songs, ranging from sacred music to medleys from Les Miserables and The Sound of Music. There were several beautiful solo and duet performances given by these talented singers and musicians. The audience's response was most enthusiastic and we very much hope that Belcanto will be able to perform another concert for us soon.
As well as a most enjoyable afternoon a sum of £300 was raised for the Church funds.

The PCC would also like to thank the Hollowell Steam Rally Committee for their generous donation of £750 which we will use towards maintaining the fabric of our beautiful church.



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Over the Counter

Well, Christmas is fast approaching! Did you get to the Taster Session on Saturday 7th November? Even if you missed it, there might still be time to put in your Christmas order. Ask at the Shop for a form. Let Creaton Village Shop take care of your big Christmas shop!
In case you are stuck for ideas, we have all types of meat including turkey, goose, pheasant, capon, pigs in blanket as well as cold meats and pork pies. Also there are vegetables, fruit, salad, chocolates and so much more. Come and browse before placing your order.

Our Treasurer for many years, Phil Davies, stepped down at the AGM in September. We are all extremely grateful for the enormous contribution Phil has made, helping steer the Society and the Shop to the strong position it is in today. So, Phil has left some rather big boots to fill but we have been extremely fortunate that Alina Easton, a CIMA qualified accountant has agreed to join us and has already made several helpful suggestions. Alina has been co-opted on to the Board and will stand for election at our next AGM.

Do you have a couple of hours free each week to help volunteer with us? It is great fun and full training is given. Come and talk to any of the team and shadow them to see how you get on - and Christmas will be a good time to join and help out.

Our seasonal opening times are opposite.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our favourite customers - including you!

Creaton Village Shop & Post Office

Christmas and New Year 2026/27
Opening Times



24th December
7:30AM - 17:00PM
25th December
Closed
26th December
Closed
27th December
8:00AM - 12:00 Noon
28th December
7:30AM - 12:00 Noon
31st December
7:30AM - 17:00PM
1st January
7:30AM - 12:00 Noon

Normal hours
resume after 2nd January

A Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year to you all!!!

Friends of St Michael's History Group

The October meeting drew in a good audience to hear Graham McKechnie talk about Edgar Mobbs, the Saints player from the early 20th century, his influence on the game and how it continued into the First World War.

The December talk, on the 17th, will be Dr Mike Muncaster on the Stars of the D'Oyly Carte. This was the musical theatre company that brought Gilbert and Sullivan's masterpieces to the public stage. Mike's talk uses historic recordings and images to illustrate principals in the company from 1900-1982. There might even be a bit of a chance to sing along!

In January (21st), Helen Frost joins us to tell of Convalescing at Cottesbrooke Hall during the First World War, the story of how a Northamptonshire country house opened its doors during the Great War to care for soldiers.





Creaton URC

You are warmly welcome to join us for our Sunday Worship

Sunday	December	
6th 11am	Morning Worship Gift Service	Jon Heard
13th 11am	Morning Worship and Holy Communion	Rev Geoff Townsend
20th 11am	Morning Worship	Rev Jay Phelps
25th 10:30am	Christmas Morning Worship	Marion Heard
	January	
3rd 11am	Morning Worship and Holy Communion	Jon Heard
10th 11:50am	Morning Worship	Rev Geoff Townsend
17th 11am	Joint Service with St Michael"s Week of Christian Unity	
24th 11am	Morning Worship	Rev Jay Phelps
31st 11am	Joint Service with Crick & Long Buckby	

Poppies Coffee Shop is open every Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 12 noon. You will be made very welcome.

Poppies will close on Friday December 18th and re-open on Wednesday 30th December

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CREATON PARISH COUNCIL

Creaton Parish Council Contact Details
You can contact our Parish Clerk for Creaton Parish Council, Katrina Jones on clerk@creaton-pc.gov.uk. Agendas and minutes of meetings are available on the Parish Council website:
https://creaton-pc.gov.uk/
and are also posted on the noticeboard on Violet Lane. We also have a Facebook page.

Parish Council Meeting dates:
Meetings are held bi-monthly usually on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at Creaton Village Hall. The next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday 12th January 2027.

West Northants Council Consultations
West Northants Council hold regular consultations on a range of issues. Full details of current consultations can be found online at: https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/

Planning Applications
Please look on the West Northants Council website for full details of all Planning Applications:
https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/planning-applications-and-enforcement/view-and-comment-planning-application

Fix My Street
West Northamptonshire Council are responsible for highway issues such as potholes, fly tipping and grit bins. You can report concerns directly to them on the Fix My Street website:
https://www.fixmystreet.com/

Litter Pick
THANK YOU! to everyone who joined us for the village litter pick. Thank you also to all those who help keep the village tidy everyday by putting their litter in the bin.

Memorial Testing
Every few years the Parish Council instructs a qualified contractor to carry out testing on the memorials in the churchyard to ensure they are safe. This is due to take place in the coming months. If you have any concerns please contact the Parish Clerk.



Speed Watch
Thanks to the support of councillors and volunteers the Speed Watch Campaign is now underway. If anyone else would like to volunteer please contact the Parish Clerk or the co-ordinator Cllr Ian Horne. The more people that volunteer the more likely this project is to be successful in reducing speeding traffic through our village.

A speed gun has been purchased by the Parish Council and full training will be given.

Welford Road Planning Application
The planning application (2026/1111/MAO)for the erection of up to 46 homes (including 40% affordable) was approved by West Northamptonshire Council's planning committee and full details can be found on the WNC planning portal: https://wnc.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/2026/1111/MAO

At this time the Parish Council do not have any further information on the timescale of this development.

In light of this development being approved the Parish Council has asked WNC to reduce the future number of houses allocated to be built in the Parish under the WNC Local Plan and has asked them to consider re-opening the school in Creaton.





GUILSBOROUGH NEWS

Parish Council News

Our Facebook Page
Have you seen that we've started a Parish Council facebook page? Easily found by searching for us on Facebook then follow us and you'll receive alerts when we post anything new.

Bus Subsidy Consultation
We are currently seeking your views on whether we should continue to subsidise our bus service (Routes 60 and 59). Currently we contribute over £1400 towards maintaining this service. Let us know if you think this is money well spent or is it a waste of our money. You can access the short survey on our website (guilsborough-pc.gov.uk) or via our facebook page or for those that can't access it by any other way you can request a paper copy by emailing clerk@guilsborough-pc.gov.uk or phoning 07918 329763 and leaving a message.
Consultation closes at the end of December

Guilsborough Neighbourhood Plan
Our Neighbourhood Plan, which is a legal document that helps protect our village from large scale speculative planning applications, needs to be updated due to changes in planning regulations from central government and the emerging new planning policy from West Northants Council.
We are setting up a small group as a steering committee to assist with this considerable project comprising of parish councillors and Guilsborough residents.
If you would like to be involved with this project please contact David O'Neil either by email, councillor.oneil@guilsborough-pc.gov.uk or by phone 07801 700909

Playground
Hopefully by the time you're reading this all the fencing will have been removed from around the new climbing net. The replacement turf and the fresh seeding seems to have taken well so this should be bringing this project to a close.
Thank you for all the hard work put in by the Guilsborough Playground Action Committee in raising the funds that contributed towards financing the new equipment. A special thank you to Dave Wooldridge who spent many, many hours on the phone and the internet to secure a grant from Winwick Wind Farm.
This isn't a time to sit back though as there's still quite a lot of equipment that is rapidly reaching it's end of life and needs replacing.

A Light for a Loved One



Guilsborough Church invites loved one from whom they are parted this Christmas, by sponsoring a simple white light on the trees by the churchyard gate. Each light will shine out through the Christmas season as a symbol of comfort to all.
As well as the light outside the church there will be the opportunity to have a message on a star hung on a tree inside the church.
The lights will be switched on at a short ceremony on Sunday 6th December at 4:30pm to which all are welcome.
To request a light please complete the form below and return to either:
Janet Minney - Hollowell Spring, Nortoft or
Guilsborough Post Office

Name of person(s) to be remembered

_____

Short message to be written on a star

_____

_____

Amount enclosed (suggested donation £10)

£_____ cash or cheque to Guilsborough PCC

Remembrance Day

Pam Townsend and The British Legion led a moving and well-attended Remembrance event in The Village Hall to dedicate the tree hung with poppies knitted and crocheted by villagers. Pam read the poem below, and explained it's significance. There was also music and other readings.

In Flanders Fields by Jim McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



GPFA
village sport & recreation

Guilsborough Festive Pop-up-Pub

Guilsborough Village Hall



FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER 2026

Draught beer / Draught Lager
Cider/Wine/ Prosecco/Gin and
Tonic/Soft drinks

With grateful support from The Red Lion Pub, Thornby
and run by Guilsborough Playing Field Association



Guilsborough Bridge Day raised over £2,100 for Guilsborough Playing Fields Association. See report on page x. Our thanks to everyone who attended, and the many helpers who made it possible! Lucy Tomkins and Julia Moorhead



Guilsborough Tennis Club
at Guilsborough Academy

Graham Metcalfe gratefully received a generous contribution from Neil Byrd and Jim Hollowell at the Hollowell Steam Giveaway to ensure that GTC members can continue playing tennis into the 2026/27 season

Join our friendly community tennis club at Guilsborough Academy courts. We meet on Sunday mornings, weather permitting. For more information, scan the QR code or contact Graham on 07894 424328.





GUILSBOROUGH NEWS



Guilsborough C of E Primary School

It has been a wonderfully busy and successful Autumn term at Guilsborough Primary School and we are extremely proud of all that our children have achieved so far. I wanted to express my heartfelt thanks to all of the pupils, staff and parents for your continued support for our wonderful school.

Our pupils have thrown themselves into learning and have enjoyed a variety of enrichment opportunities along the way. This term we have held a Maths Afternoon, celebrated European Day of Languages and enjoyed our sports competitions throughout the term. These events have given children the chance to develop new skills, broaden their experiences and celebrate learning together.

This term, we were pleased to open our doors to prospective families, offering them the chance to experience firsthand the caring, ambitious and vibrant learning environment at Guilsborough Primary School. Visitors enjoyed seeing our Reception and Year 1 classrooms in action and learning more about the exciting opportunities available to our pupils. If your child is due to start Reception in September 2027 or if you are looking for a place in another primary year group, please get in touch to arrange a personal visit. We would be delighted to show you around and answer any questions you may have.

This Autumn term also saw the first meetings of our School Council and Eco Warriors groups. The children have already put forward some fantastic ideas to help improve the school environment and strengthen our community. We look forward to seeing these projects develop over the coming months.

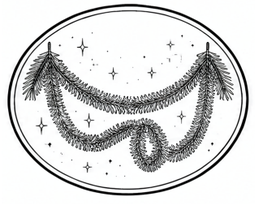
A huge thank you goes to all parents and carers who attended our recent Parents' Evenings. Working in partnership with families is incredibly important to us and it was wonderful to celebrate the progress and achievements of our pupils together.

Our Year 5 pupils completed their Bikeability training and received excellent feedback from instructors for their behaviour, positive attitudes and determination. They should all be very proud of their achievements.

We have also had many children representing the school at Pacesetters sporting events. As always, they have been fantastic ambassadors for Guilsborough Primary School, demonstrating teamwork, resilience and excellent sportsmanship. Their success continues to grow and our trophy cabinet is certainly becoming well stocked!

Please remember, if you need any information about what's happening at Guilsborough Primary we have lots of information on our website www.guilsboroughprimary.co.uk or you can keep up to speed by Following us on X (aka Twitter) @GuilsboroughPri / X and Instagram account instagram.com/guilsboroughprimaryschool

Mrs K. Shilliam
Headteacher



GUILSBOROUGH FRIENDS - Where good company meets great conversation

Looking to make new friends and enjoy lively social activities in a warm welcoming group? Guilsborough Friends is a diverse mix of ladies and gentlemen who enjoy meeting once a month to share interests, ideas and good company.

Our varied programme includes:

- Fascinating guest speakers
- Informative garden visits
- Enjoyable suppers and social evenings
- Visits to local places of interest
- And plenty more besides

£3 per meeting, unless otherwise stated, which is used to cover refreshments, costs and make charitable donations.

Our Programme for the next 3 months:
Thursday 3rd December - Christmas Party
Tuesday 14th January - Speaker, to be confirmed
Thursday 11th February - Charity Supper for Thomas's Fund (For music therapy for children/young people who have a life limiting diagnosis or disability)

We look forward to welcoming new members.

For further information contact:
Janet Minney T 01604 740640
Elizabeth Southgate T 01604 740064

Shoe Boxes 2026

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Shoe Box collection this year. We have sent 115 shoe boxes and a number of candles, in support of the Blythwood Project. They will be going to families in the Ukraine

Janet.



GMADS 2027 PRODUCTIONS

The New Year brings two new GMADS productions. On 29th January you can enjoy a Medieval supper along with songs, tales and merriment in the company of Chaucer's pilgrims. As tickets are limited, you will need to book by 15 January to make sure of your place at the table! Tickets are £27 available from Karen on 07981 765852 or www.ticketsource.co.uk/gmads. See back page (p24) for poster

From 18-20 March, Gip Ingles directs Murdered to Death by Peter Gordon. It's a classic murder mystery with a comedy twist. Put the dates in your diary.

More info on all GMADS events at www.gmads.co.uk or Facebook GMADSAmateurDrama.

The Seven Ages of Man

In the previous edition of Village Link (VL137) the article about St Etheldreda's Church noted the sixty-eight carved heads in stone and wood acting as corbels, supporting the roof trusses. Sometimes these are faces of local dignitaries, or funders of the building, or even of the masons themselves. Often they carry a religious message, representing the 7 Deadly Sins, or key people from the Bible. In Guilsborough there are also a group representing the Seven Ages of Man.

The Seven Ages can be dated back to the ancient Greeks but the most well-known version comes to us from Shakespeare. The monologue is from *As You Like It*, where all the world's a stage and all the people, actors.

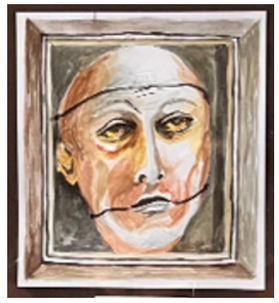
The images here have been made by Pam Townsend, from the carvings overhead in the church. The Ages, from top to bottom are:

- The Infant
- Childhood - the Schoolboy
- Youth - the Lover
- Young Man - the Soldier
- Middle Age - the Justice
- Old Man - the Pantaloon
- Death















MMM

Monday Morning Meet

Guilsborough Village Hall
9 – 11am every Monday (excluding Bank Holidays)
All welcome, baby – OAPs.
£2.50 per Adult, Children Free
Meet for a chat, knit, hot drink & cake.

For more information contact
Janet 01604 740640

Christmas Party 14th December
MMM as normal on 21st December
No MMM on 28th December
Back to normal on January 4th 2027

Hollowell Steam Rally surpasses £2 million milestone for charity

The Hollowell Steam Rally's annual Give Away evening is always a wonderfully jolly, yet deeply moving, occasion.

As the year draws to a close, rally organisers, volunteers and representatives of local charities come together to celebrate another successful event and, most importantly, to share the proceeds with deserving causes. The Steam Rally was set up by Allen Eaton in 1986 and apart from the covid years has been run every year since then.

Continuing a tradition that now spans 37 years, Rally Chairman Neil Byrd and his team presented cheques totalling almost £74,000 to 63 good causes and charities this year. Among the beneficiaries were churches, hospices, playing fields, Scout groups, the Royal Air Force Association and the Fire Fighters Charity.



The evening took place at the Tractor Barn Wedding and Events venue on the outskirts of Guilsborough, where the celebrations culminated in a particularly special moment. A banner was unfurled to reveal that, since the Rally began in 1986, it has raised more than £2 million for good causes — a truly remarkable achievement and a testament to the generosity and hard work of everyone involved.

Rally commentator Peter Godwin paid tribute to Neil Byrd and the Rally committee, thanking them for the "herculean effort" involved in staging the Hollowell Show.

Their dedication, together with the enthusiasm of countless volunteers and the continued support of visitors and exhibitors, has helped make the Rally a much-loved fixture in the local calendar — and a tremendous force for good in the community.

Bravo to Neil, the committee, the volunteers and everyone who has helped make this achievement possible!

Village Hall Lotto Winners for September and October were…

John Benjamin
Declan Allen
Chris Webb
Kevin Daykin
Katherine Clarke
Jacob Oswin
Diana Leach
Liz Hunt
Martin Leach

A Sunny September Big Breakfast

It was a beautiful autumn morning for our September Big Breakfast at the Village Hall. The sunshine, the smell of freshly cooked bacon and the welcome of good company meant many lingered a while to catch up and chat.

It was especially lovely to see visitors from the neighbouring parishes of Guilsborough and Ravensthorpe. The hot rolls, prepared on the new oven, were a triumph, the coffee hot and strong and the cakes were delicious.



Our young tombola compère, Jacob Oswin, did a great job keeping everyone entertained, with plenty of interest in winning the much sought after prize - the sparkly silver leaping dolphin.

A warm thank you to everyone who helped behind the scenes, particularly the kitchen and clearing teams, who worked steadily throughout the morning with their usual good humour.

And, of course, thank you to everyone who came along and helped make it such a fun and successful morning.



Home at Last

You've probably met a character like Badger. He's the one that helps you go to sleep at night, makes a grazed knee feel better and is you friend and ally when faced with completely unreasonable parents!

So, imagine the collective family horror at the end of this summer, when we realised that Badger had been left on an overnight ferry to France with little chance of return. My four year old grandson's grief was heartbreaking.

As a last resort, I put a plea on the Village WhatsApp on the off chance that someone had one of these now obsolete toys in a corner of their homes. It wasn't to be, but of course Hollowell swung into action.

Messages of understanding and support followed, and people took to the online buying platforms to find replacements. Advice flowed from those who had been through something similar. We sourced a Doppelganger who could be with us in four, very long, days.

But then something slightly magical happened. I received a story board from a lovely and very modest member of the village, which explained Badger's absence with a day-by-day update to comfort a very sad little boy. I was overwhelmed by such kindness and thought you might like to share the story, which I'm delighted to say had a happy ending, just as the story said!

Claire Morrell



Puddings, Pints and Puzzling Questions at Hollowell Harvest Supper



The Hollowell Harvest Supper was a jolly affair, with forty-five guests gathering in the Village Hall to enjoy a sumptuous autumn feast.

Thanks to the arrival of a new cooker and some much-needed modernisation of the hall's electrics, the chefs could concentrate on the cooking without the usual worry of whether all five hob rings and both ovens could be used at the same time, without plunging the kitchen into darkness!

Diners tucked into homemade cottage pie, accompanied by steaming platters of vegetables, followed by a glorious array of desserts. There was also plenty of head-scratching as guests tackled a table-top quiz, all about traditional British puddings. Meanwhile, a keg of Nene Valley New Age Chestnut Bitter went down a treat, and the evening drew to a close with the raffle before carriages rolled at 9.30pm.

Many thanks go to all the cooks, hall decorators, bar staff and washing-up team for their hard work, and for the support of the village in making this village hall fund-raiser such a success.



Dates for your Diary.

Hopewell "coffee and a chat:

Friday 19h December
Friday 22nd January
Friday 26th February
Friday 19th March
Why not come and join us for a cuppa, a piece of delicious cake and a catch up with friends. We meet in Hollowell Village Hall, 10.30am to 12.30pm

For more information, or for help with transport, please call Paul on 07780 265614 or email:
wearehopewell@gmail.com.

EVERYONE WELCOME.

Cafe Christmas...

...will be taking place in Hollowell Village Hall on Saturday 5th December 9.30am to 12 noon. Hot sausage and bacon rolls, homemade cake, coffee & tea and local crafts and produce on sale.

From the kitchen to the fields: a double win for Thornby





THE RT. HON. STUART ANDREW MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Thornby Farms
Thorny House
Welford Road
Thornby
Northampton
NN6 8SJ

21 October 2026

To all at Thornby Farms

I was delighted to see that Thornby Farms had been awarded Gold in the Farming Environment category at this year's Weetabix Northamptonshire Food & Drink Awards.

I wanted to write and offer my warmest congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

Farming plays such an important role in our rural communities, and I know the considerable challenges faced by those working in the agricultural sector. It is therefore especially pleasing to see local farms recognised for their commitment to the environment alongside the vital work of food production.

This is a wonderful achievement for Thornby Farms and something everyone involved should be very proud of.

Please accept my congratulations and thanks for the contribution you make to our local farming community. I wish you continued success in the years ahead.

With best wishes

The Rt. Hon. Stuart Andrew MP

Member of Parliament for the Daventry Constituency

Serving the wards of Braunston and Crick • Brixworth • Daventry South East • Daventry North West • Daventry South • Drayton • Long Buckby • Moulton • Kingsthorpe South • Rural South Northamptonshire and parts of Crick • Hardtoft Park • Irchester • Kingsthorpe South • Rural South Northamptonshire

Congratulations to The Red Lion's Alfie Gravett, from Spratton, who won Young Chef of the Year in this year's Weetabix Food and Drink Awards, and also to the team at Thornby Farms, who picked up the Gold Award in the Environment Category at the awards. See front page for more on Alfie's win, and adjacent, a letter from our local MP Stuart Andrew, congratulating Peter Moyes and the team. Wonderful news, and a real accolade for Thornby village!



The Red Lion's Team of Chefs at the Awards
Left to right: Simon Cottle, Charlie Worth, Alfie Gravett, John Young, Shelly Smith, Matt Merrett

Thornby
Village Hall

Hire charge
£10 per hour

Fully equipped and newly decorated hall with a capacity to hold 40 people.

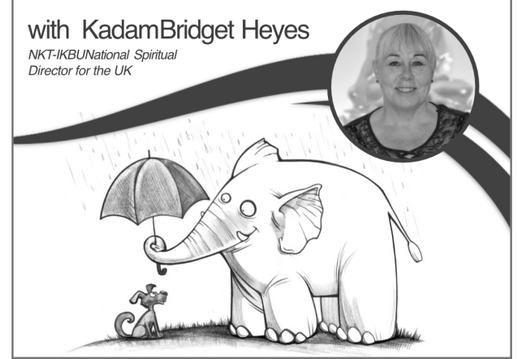
Ideal for intimate gatherings, childrens parties, courses, talks and meetings etc.

Tables, chairs and gazebos available for use on and off site.

Contact Alex Todd - 07872839199



HALF-DAY MEDITATION COURSE
5TH DECEMBER| 10.30AM - 1.15PM
The gift of gratitude
The Buddhist path to contentment
with KadamBridget Heyes
NKT-IKBUNational Spiritual Director for the UK



Nagarjuna KadampaMeditation Centre
Centre for Modern Buddhism• Thornby Hall NN6 8SW
Tel: 01604743976 • *info@meditateinnorthants.com*
www.meditateinnorthants.com



Spires and Towers
Uplands Churches in the Village Link area

St Denys' Church, Cold Ashby



St Denys' Church stands on elevated ground in Cold Ashby, and remains an important village landmark. The earliest recorded reference is from the reign of King Stephen (1135–1154), when Hugh Poer gave the church to Daventry Priory. The register of incumbents, recording successive clergy, dates from 1258.

Dedicated to St Denys, the third-century Bishop of Paris and patron saint of France, the church has evolved over many centuries. Built principally from local lias stone, its structure comprises a nave, chancel and western tower, incorporating features from different architectural periods.

The square western tower, added in the 15th century, has an embattled parapet and distinctive corner pinnacles. The south porch, reputedly dating from around 1696, has an attractive stone entrance. Restoration took place around 1840, followed by further improvements over subsequent decades, helping preserve the building for future generations. The vestry was added in 1881.

One of the church's most impressive features is its magnificent lych gate, erected by the Reverend Gregory Bateman in 1883. Constructed from approximately seventy tons of fine white and red Ancaster stone by Allsop and Monk of Market Harborough, it cost £400 and was formally opened on 23 October 1883.

Designed in the High Victorian Gothic style, the gate features a substantial pointed arch, decorative stone columns, carved foliage and an elaborate gable surmounted by a cross. Its memorable inscription, "Death is the gate of Life", reflects the Christian belief in death as a passage to eternal life. Traditionally, lych gates provided shelter where coffins could rest before funeral services. The gate was completely restored in 2000 and remains a remarkable entrance feature. It is separately listed Grade II.

The church's stained-glass windows, principally dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, offer further historical interest. Particularly noteworthy is the south-wall window beside the pulpit, thought to be by Frederick Preedy. It depicts the church inside and out during Victorian times, showing Reverend Gregory Bateman as vicar. Details such as high pews, plastered walls and a plain medieval east window provide a fascinating record of the building's former appearance.

The twentieth century multicoloured east window above the altar is another highlight. Its letters IHS represent *Iesu Hominum Salvator*, meaning "Jesus, Saviour of Mankind".

St Denys' also possesses a remarkable ring of six bells in its medieval western tower. Particularly significant is a bell dated 1317, considered the oldest dated bell still hung for full-circle change ringing. Other bells date from 1606, 1880, 1899 and 2003.

St Denys' Church is open daily throughout the year, and all are welcome to visit this lovely historic church.

Congratulations to Cecily and Shakeel on the safe arrival of baby Zara!

2026/2027	6th Dec 2nd Sunday Advent	13th Dec 3rd Sunday Advent	20th Dec 4th Sunday Advent	27th Dec St John the Apostle	3rd January Epiphany	10th January Baptism of Christ	17th January Epiphany 2	24th January Epiphany 3	31st January Candlemass
Cold Ashby								9.30am BCP Communion	
Cottesbrooke					9.30am CW Communion		11.00am BCP Communion		
Creaton	9.30am CW Communion	9.30am BCP Morning Prayer					11.00am **Joint at URC** (Week Prayer Christian Unity) 6.00pm Evensong		10.00am Group Service
Guilsborough	11.00am BCP Communion		Brunch @11 Village Hall				Brunch @11 Village Hall		
Hollowell						11.00am CW Communion			
Ravensthorpe	8.30am BCP Morning Prayer		9.30am CW Communion		8.30am BCP Morning Prayer		9.30am CW Communion	11.00am Worship for All	
Spratton	11.00am Worship for All			10.00 **Group Service**	11.00am Worship for All			11.00am CW Communion	
Thornby									

LONG BUCKBY LIBRARY & HUB

We want to thank everyone for their support over 2026. Because of you (and our amazing volunteers and manager), we are able to provide library services, events and activities for the communities in and near Long Buckby. We wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

Here are some Christmas events:

Christmas music: Come and enjoy a relaxing evening of Christmas music with our wonderful Long Buckby Community Band on Thursday December 3rd, 7.30-9.30pm (doors open at 7pm). Come festively dressed and join in with the songs! Refreshments will be available. This is a free event but tickets are needed from the Library and the Peephole in the High Street, as space is limited. Donations are welcomed and will be shared with the band.

Christmas film: our film on 22nd December is The Man who invented Christmas. “Charles Dickens, a failed author, finds himself in a financial crisis. However, he uses his father as an inspiration and creates an unforgettable tale that redefines Christmas.” The film starts at 7.30pm, doors open at 7pm. Refreshments available.

Book Bingo! As part of the National Year of Reading, Book Bingo encourages participants of 16 years and above to explore six themed reading challenges that are flexible, accessible and enjoyable for everyone. Pick up a card in our Library and collect a stamp for each challenge you complete. Once you’ve reached a full house when all six squares are finished, return your completed card to be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 book token. Book Bingo finishes on 13 March 2027 so you have plenty of time to get a full house!

Co-op community cause: Co-op members can influence how and where the Co-op shares its profits by selecting a community cause to support. Buckby Library & Hub has been chosen as one of the causes, to support the costs of our village newsletter, the Buckby Buzz, which helps to bring people and organisations in the village together. If you are a member (it’s easy to become one!), please choose us and every time you shop you will automatically support us when you swipe your card. To find out more, go to: https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/103770. Please spread the word!

Please check our website and calendar for our many regular activities.
https://buckbylibraryhub.org; https://buckbylibraryhub.org/calendar/.

Buckby Library & Hub is a community run Charity established to provide services and activities to the Northamptonshire village of Long Buckby and its surrounding villages.

OPENING TIMES	
Tuesday	1000-1300 & 1400-1630
Wednesday	1400-1630
Thursday	1000-1300 & 1400-1630
Friday	1000-1300 & 1400-1630
Saturday	1000-1230

STOP PRESS!

BRIDGE DAY SUCCESS

Guilsborough once again demonstrated its wonderful community spirit on Wednesday 4th November, when 18 tables of enthusiastic bridge players gathered at Guilsborough Village Hall for the annual Bridge Day in support of the Guilsborough Playing Fields Association (GPFA).

The event was a great success, raising over £2,100 for the GPFA. We are absolutely delighted with the result and would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who came along to play and support this very worthwhile cause.

Special thanks go to the amazing team of volunteers who supported Julia Moorhead and Lucy Tomkins throughout. Their generosity, enthusiasm and hard work, ensured everything ran smoothly.

We are particularly grateful to Lucy (with help from four friends), and Julia and Simon, who generously provided the delicious home-cooked food. This helped keep catering costs to zero, ensuring that as much money as possible went directly to the GPFA.

Congratulations to our winners, Sue Butler and Johnnie Powell, who took the top honours on the day.

Our sincere thanks to our generous local prize donors: our wonderful Guilsborough shop, Laura and Johnny Goedhuis, Vanessa Berry (Seaton's Gifts), and The Red Barn.

Julia and Lucy would like to thank everyone who played, volunteered, donated prizes/money or contributed in any way. It was lovely to see so many people come together, and once again Guilsborough showed just what a fantastic community it is.

Thank you all for helping us raise over £2,100 for our village playing fields.









Christmas Services

Across the Uplands Group of Churches

Cold Ashby	Carol Service, December 12th at 5pm Christmas Communion, December 25th at 11am
Cottesbrooke	Carol Service, December 19th at 1pm Christmas Communion, December 25th at 11am
Creaton	Carol Service, December 20th at 3pm Christmas Communion, December 24th at 8pm
Guilsborough	Christingle, December 17th at 4.30pm Carol Service, December 20th at 6pm Christmas Communion, December 25th at 9.30am
Hollowell	Christingle and Carols, December 24th at 6.30pm
Ravensthorpe	Nativity with donkey, December 19th at 3.30pm Carol Service and the return of the travelling cribs, December 24th at 5pm Christmas Communion, December 25th at 9.30am
Spratton	Midnight Christmas Communion, December 24th at 11.30pm
Thornby	Carol Service, December 20th at 3pm Christmas Communion, December 25th at 9.30am

The Ministry Team and the PCCs of the Uplands Group of Churches wish you a blessed Christmas and pray for a peaceful 2027.



Celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary and completion of the 630 mile South West Coast Path, Rob and Pat Underwood of Guilsborough. Congratulations!

ERRATA!

Please forgive any missing items or mistakes in this issue (and the last one!). Our volunteer team is getting to grips with new publishing software following Microsoft's retirement of Publisher, and we're still finding our feet. Thanks for your understanding.

ALPHABETICAL ADVERTISERS	
AGA Wise Boiler Service p.23	LocBox Storage Solutions p.6
JM Billings Plumbing & Heating p.6	Michael Babb Foot & Health p.8
Brixworth Osteopathic Clinic p.2	Millie's Bakery p.5
MJ Burdett Plumber p.7	Merrick School of Driving & Towing p.6
Chestnut Developments p.10	Nick Dixon Financial Planning p.5
Compass Energy p.2	The Paper Apple Co p.8
Creaton Village Shop p.2	Welford Xmas Tree Farm p.8
Daniel's Landscapes p.6	White Kitchen Company p.5
Ewe Move Estate Agents p.12	Wild Lemon Yoga p.14
Flower & Farmer p.23	Wills Direct p.6
Jomidar Lounge, Creaton p.23	

Guilsborough Music & Drama Society
invites you to



join Chaucer's band of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury with songs, tales and merriment at....

A Medieval Supper & Entertainment

Friday 29 January 2027

Guilsborough Village Hall

Tavern bar opens at 6.30pm

Bring your own tankard

Medieval dress optional but fun!



Tickets £27 from Karen on 07981 754852 or www.ticketsource.com/gmads

Strictly limited places at the table! Book by Friday 15 January
Please specify any dietary requirements when booking

Facebook GMADSAmateurDrama
www.gmads.co.uk