



The newsletter for the community of Orford and Gedgrave

Issue No. 405 December 2025

Edited by: NOTT Clerk and OGPC Clerk

Published by: Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council and New Orford Town Trust

Printed by: Leiston Press Ltd

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All copy must be received by midday on Thursday 11 December, preferably by email to:

orfordtrust@outlook.com or put through the Town Hall letterbox

Priority for inclusion is given to articles that are about or directly affect the community of Orford and Gedgrave and inclusion is subject to editing and availability of space. Contributors should be aware that this newsletter is published on the website of Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council and the New Orford Town Trust (www.orfordparishandtrust.onesuffolk.net)

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY 2026 ISSUE OF VILLAGE VOICE IS MIDDAY ON THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER - PLEASE NOTE EARLY COPY DATE

TOWN HALL OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

Please note that the Trust Clerk will be working until 1pm on Tuesday 23 December, and the Parish Clerk until 12noon on Tuesday 23 December. The office will then be closed for the Christmas break and will reopen on Tuesday 6 January 2026.

We'd like to thank all the Parish Council and Trust staff for their work over the past year, and on behalf of the Parish Council and Trust would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Anne Macro and Ian Thornton, Chairmen, OGPC and NOTT

FORMER NEWSPAPER KIOSK

After the recent retirement of Ron and Linda Scarce, New Orford Town Trust is having the kiosk spruced up. We wondered if there is anybody in the village who might be interested in having a small pop-up shop in that area in the lead up to Christmas. Please do get in touch.

Kara Reed, Clerk to New Orford Town Trust, orfordtrust@outlook.com, 01394 459172

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

A party will be held on Wednesday 17 December from 3.30pm to 5.30pm in Orford Town Hall. This is for children of primary school age and younger who live in Orford and Gedgrave. If you have a child that fits that age range and would like to attend, please contact Anne Macro on 01394 450741 by midday on Friday 12 December.

CAROLS AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The annual Carols around the Christmas tree will take place on Wednesday 17 December at 6.30pm on the village green outside Orford General Store. Music will be provided by the Woodbridge Excelsior Brass Band so please do come and join in with the singing and enjoy what is always a great start to the festive season.

Marie Backhouse, Clerk to Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council, clerk@orfordandgedgrave-pc.gov.uk, 01394 459172

ORFORD SPORTS AND RECREATION CLUB

The Christmas draw tickets are now available at the club, and the draw will take place on Friday 19 December, so be in it to hopefully win a prize for the festive season.

December dates for your diary (do check for Christmas closures)

- Each Monday: badminton - Orford Town Hall, 10am-12noon
- Each Monday: art class - Bart's Hall, 10am-1pm, all welcome (tel 07714 644584 for more details)
- Each Monday and Wednesday: Methodist Chapel tea room, lunch, afternoon tea, 11am-2pm
- Each Tuesday: chair pilates - Orford Sports and Recreation Club, 11.30am-12.30pm (tel Suzanne Kearney for more details, 07944 991138)
- Each Tuesday: pickleball - Orford Town Hall, 7-9pm
- Each Wednesday: badminton - Orford Town Hall, 7-9pm
- Each Thursday: bellringing - Orford Church, 7.30pm
- Each Friday: pickleball - Orford Town Hall, 10am-12noon
- Each Friday: Friday Soup - Bart's Hall, 12.30-2pm
- Each Saturday: Orford Country Market - Orford Town Hall, 9.30am-1pm
- Thursday 4 December: Gardening Club - Orford Town Hall, 7pm
- Saturday 6 December: St Bartholomew's Church Christmas Bazaar - St Bartholomew's Church, 2-4pm
- Sunday 7 December: Band of the Royal British Legion Leiston Christmas concert - St Bartholomew's Church, 2.30pm
- Friday 12 December: Talks 4 Thomas - Orford Town Hall, 6.30 for 7pm
- Saturday 13 December: concert with Hayden Thorpe and SYRINX choir - St Bartholomew's Church, 4pm
- Wednesday 17 December: Children's Christmas Party - Orford Town Hall, 3.30-5.30pm (please call organiser in advance, see left)
- Wednesday 17 December: Carols around the Christmas tree - village green outside Orford General Store, 6.30pm
- Wednesday 24 December: Crib Service - St Bartholomew's Church, 4pm

- Saturday 13 December: live music with 'Game on', 90s indie tribute band, from 8pm

- New Year's Eve: live music with Dave and John from 8pm

There will be no club night on Boxing Day night (Friday).

Have a happy Christmas from all at the Club, and thanks for your support.

Mark Smy, Secretary, 450358

ORFORD BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS

The Orford Bonfire and Fireworks had another successful year. Attendance and donations were good allowing us to plan for next year and the weather was also good considering we had had a bad

few days leading up to the Saturday. Thank you for your patience with the BBQ and lighting of the fireworks. Even though we try our hardest to do these at the times advertised sometimes we have to delay slightly.

This event could not happen without the support of so many people, before, during and after the event. Firstly, we would like to again thank Michael Cordle for his continued support with the loan of his field, as well as the vital support from Raydon Hall Farm, The Mixing Bowl, Nathan Smy and Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council.

Other people we must thank include Guy Marshall, Orford Meat Shed, Orford General Store, Orford Recreation Club, Pinney's, Fireworks Crazy, Mark Rumsey and Mark Baines, as well as all of the volunteers, bucket collectors and first aiders.

We hope to see you all at next year's event.

Orford Bonfire and Fireworks Committee

FRIENDS OF ST BARTHOLOMEW'S QUIZ EVENING – THANK YOU

A record-breaking ninety people attended the Quiz in aid of the Friends of St. Bartholomew's Church Charity at the Town Hall on 15 November. Eleven teams hotly contested six rounds of inventive and entertaining questions set by Quizmaster extraordinaire Graeme Kay. In a nail-biting finish, The Intollerables and The Market Hillbillies tied for first place, with The Blow-Ins a close third. Congratulations to all!

The charity's Trustees warmly thank everyone who supported the evening by taking part, buying raffle tickets and using the bar – and for help putting tables and chairs away and clearing up at the end. From the feedback, everyone enjoyed the evening, including the delicious supper of tagine with cous cous followed by apricot panna cotta provided by The Mixing Bowl. Thank you very much also to Graeme for the excellent quiz, Heather for tech support, John G for the sound system, and everyone else who helped make the evening a success.

Richard Murley and the Trustees of the Friends of St Bartholomew's Church Charity

DECEMBER WITH TMEF

December is a busy month for everyone in the build up to Christmas, and that includes the team at TMEF. We have three events planned for this month.

The first is our celebrated Christmas Stall at the St Bartholomew's Church Christmas Bazaar in Orford on Saturday 6 December which starts at 2pm. Our stall will be packed with all sorts of homemade 'goodies' including mini Christmas cakes, mince pies, Christmas tiffin, fudge, biscotti plus an array of preserves such as Christmas chutney, sloe and apple jelly, chilli jam, chilli paste, rhubarb jam and chutney. All make ideal edible gifts. For the more difficult to choose for, there will also be a selection of handcrafted wooden 'bits and bobs' or how about some reindeer pots, Christmas gnomes and plenty more! Come and have a look!

The following day, on Sunday 7 December, we have great pleasure in presenting The Band of The Royal British Legion Leiston Christmas Concert in St Bartholomew's at 2.30pm. Nothing says Christmas quite like listening and singing along to a good old brass band. This exceptional band will treat us to a rousing performance with a varied programme full of Christmas cheer. Tickets are £10 for adults and £2.50 for children and this includes tea and cake!

Then on Friday 12 December in Orford Town Hall is 'The Beatles' - the third in our series of Talks for Thomas. Alex Worrall is kindly coming along to talk about The Beatles having met John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Part of the talk will be about John Lennon's peace journey from Gibraltar to Amsterdam. He also has a lot of Beatles memorabilia which he will be bringing along and displaying. The evening will start at 6.30pm with a glass of wine and nibbles and the talk will commence at 7pm. Tickets are £10.

To book your tickets for the Brass Band Christmas Concert and/or The Beatles talk, please contact Wendy on 01394 450090 or email at contact@tmeff.org.uk

We will be continuing the series talks in February so watch this space for further details.

And finally we would like to thank everyone who has come along to any of our events and supported or made donations in 2025. Many young lives have been changed in rural Mozambique and you have also made more children have something to smile about this Christmas.

A very Merry Christmas to you all from all the trustees at TMEF.
Wendy Marshall

DAWN DIARIES CALENDAR 2026

After the success of last year's *Dawn Diaries from Orford Quay* I've expanded my focus a little and captured early mornings from the riverbank. Every dawn was so different and each had a new story to tell! As before all profits will go to Parkinson's – this year the beneficiary will be Parkinson's UK.

The Dawn Diaries from Orford River 2026 makes a great present and for those of you with friends and family abroad, can be easily sent overseas as a letter. RRP is £12.99 (slightly less if you buy direct from me). Copies available from Audrey.Boyle99@gmail.com or give me a call on 07876 633942.

Audrey Boyle

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday 6 December 2025, 2–4pm

Yes, it's that time of year again folks! The popular annual Christmas bazaar will be held in the Church from 2pm on Saturday 6 December with proceeds going to both the Church Fabric and the Thomas Marshall Education Fund. Always a great start to Christmas.

Come along with your family and friends and have some fun on the bottle tombola and the raffle and grab bargains galore from the bric-a-brac stall.

Pick up those 'must have' gifts from the Christmas stall which will be full of edible Christmas goodies and other Christmas fare, including TMEF's new Brighter Future alternative gift ideas!

Have a go on the riotous Human Christmas Machine and try to get three in a row! Refresh yourselves with a glass of delicious, mulled wine and a mince pie and/or a cup of tea and a slice of cake and listen to Nick Raison playing your seasonal favourites on the piano.

Cakes for both the teas and cake stall, bottles for the bottle tombola, raffle prizes, games, and any items of good quality and in good working order that you can offer to be sold on the bric-a-brac stall, would be greatly appreciated.

Please bring all items to the Church ideally on the Friday afternoon (5 December) or on the morning of the bazaar or contact the people below.

Look forward to seeing you all on Saturday 6 December!
Bottle Tombola Tina Mackie 07947 721036
Cakes Libby Archer 07713 413494
Christmas Stall Wendy Marshall 01394 450090
Raffle John & Veronica Bevan 01394 450631

Wendy Marshall

NEW YEAR'S DAY RIVER DIP

Back by significantly more NO demand than there has been in any previous year, once again there will be a few delusional, desperate souls taking a very short New Year swim/dip off the slipway on New Year's Day, Thursday 1 January 2026 at 10am.

And once again if enough people attend to swim and/or support, Matt Smy, our harbour master has 'guaranteed' to put his unused speedos on and join the dip...

Please do feel free to come and join me/us and blow away the cobwebs and Christmas indulgences. We will make space for everyone. As is traditional, we completely understand if you couldn't think of anything worse to do on the first day of the year.

In the meantime, very Happy Christmas and New Year to all of the wonderful village of Orford!

Nick Pearce

ORFORD AND DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

Our next event:

Thursday Evening 4 December 2025, 7pm – AGM and social supper

This event is always the highlight of the calendar year and very well attended by members and their guests. We begin with mulled drinks and a very short AGM informing everyone of the events and activities of the past year including the work we have done in creating and maintaining a seasonal garden in the school. This is followed by a delicious supper prepared and served by the Committee.

2026 is the fiftieth Anniversary of the Gardening Club and we plan to make it a very special year!

To celebrate this achievement we have booked Frances Tophill to launch the year on Saturday 7 February in Orford Town Hall at 3pm. She will be answering our questions and we will then have afternoon tea.

Frances is busy on our screens in programmes such as BBC *Gardeners' World* and *Love your Garden* but she remains very much a hands-on gardener bringing new life to her own garden on Dartmoor and previously working as Head Gardener and Grower at the Sharpham Trust, Devon. She gardens with disabled adults and is often personally involved with the planting on *Love your Garden*. She has published several times, with titles such as *A Year in a Small Garden*, documenting her own new-to-her garden, *The Container Garden*, and *The Modern Gardener*.

Frances is now coming to Orford to talk about rewilding a garden and she will suggest ways to increase biodiversity in our own gardens by using planting to encourage more birds, bees and butterflies. This is exemplified in her book *Rewild Your Garden: Create a Haven for Birds, Bees and Butterflies* which will be available to purchase along with her latest one *A Wildflower Year*.

We will be taking bookings in January by contacting Polly as below – members £20 and non-members £25. *Gift vouchers will be available in advance if you haven't finished your Christmas presents yet...* Meanwhile – enjoy the Festive Season and we hope to meet you in 2026!

Polly Sharkey, Chair, creativefutures98@btinternet.com

DECEMBER AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S

Sunday 7 December: Second Sunday after Advent

9.30 am Holy Communion at Orford – Revd Mandy Reynolds

Sunday 14 December: Third Sunday after Advent

8am BCP Holy Communion at Orford – Revd Mandy Reynolds

10am Family Service at Orford – Guy Marshall

Sunday 21 December: Fourth Sunday after Advent

11am Nine Lessons & Carols at Orford – Revd Mandy Reynolds

Christmas Eve, 24 December

4pm Crib Service at Orford – Guy Marshall

10pm Holy Communion for Christmas at Orford – Revd Mandy Reynolds

Christmas Day, 25 December

10am Family Service at Orford – Guy Marshall

Sunday 4 January 2026: Second Sunday after Christmas

9.30am Holy Communion at Orford – Revd Mandy Reynolds

Diana Grayburn, Church Warden, 450771

DECEMBER AT ORFORD METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday 7 December 10.30am Advent Readings and Carols

Sunday 14 December 10.30am Stephen Caley

Sunday 21 December 10.30am Rev Saul Young, People's Nativity 'A Trip to the Theatre' also Membership Sunday and Communion

Tuesday 23 December 4.30pm Carol singing, Christingles, Candlelight and refreshments

Christmas Day service 10.30am – short service for all ages

Sunday 28 December 10.30am Stephen Caley

Sunday 4 January 10.30am Stephen Caley

You will be welcome at any of our services – refreshments are served afterwards.

Chapel Tea Room, open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11am–2pm(ish) up to 17 December – then closed for two weeks. Reopening on Monday 5 January 2026.

Christmas crafts: Chapel Tea Room also open on Saturday 6 December from 10.30am–3pm with crafts/gifts for Christmas and much more with coffee, lunch, tea and cake.

We gathered for the annual Remembrance Service and silence – a very poignant service with all the names recorded on the Orford and Sudbourne War Memorials displayed in church. The citation was read by Ellen. Afterwards handmade poppies were distributed to all.

We look forward to receiving new members into the church at the service on 21 December when the young people will perform a very modern Nativity 'A Trip to the Theatre'

We are most grateful for the very generous donations given to the church in memory of the Late Niall Higbee – the Felixstowe Rowing Club also received a similar amount.

A very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year from all at the Methodist Church.

Stephen Caley

ORFORD MUSEUM

History Festival at Butley Priory

- Thursday 26 February, 4-5pm, Richard Barber: 'Henry II and Orford Castle'
- Thursday 26 February, 6-7pm, Frances Welch: 'The Lives and Deaths of the Princesses of Hesse'
- Friday 27 February, 4-5pm, Mike Lowndes: 'Frederick Barnes, the man who made Victorian Orford'
- Friday 27 February 6-7pm, Nick Robinson: 'Politics & the Media: the power struggle from Dickens to Churchill to Trump'
- Saturday 28 February, 4-5pm, William Whyte: 'Unlocking the Church: the lost secrets of Victorian sacred space'
- Saturday 28 February, 6-7pm, Philip Webster in conversation with Martin Fletcher: 'From Heath to Brexit: A Look Back at Four Tumultuous Decades of British Politics'

Tickets for all these talks cost £15 for Friends of Orford Museum and £20 for guests. Please book through our website at www.orfordmuseum.org.uk where you will find full details of the talks and speakers.

Elizabeth Spinney

CONCERT IN ORFORD CHURCH

Saturday 13 December, 4pm

In September 2024 Hayden Thorpe released Ness. An album inspired by Orford Ness, a former Ministry of Defence site during both World Wars and the Cold War, it was acquired by the National Trust in 1993 and left to re-wild. To this day, it remains a place of paradox, mystery and constant evolution. Using a process of redaction, Thorpe brings the songs to life from the words of pioneering, best-selling place writer Robert Macfarlane's book of the same name. The album was launched with four powerful performances on the site itself as part of 'Ness Speaks', in collaboration with the National Trust, where Thorpe and his collaborators Propellor Ensemble delivered the music live for the first time to an audience, in a room containing a decommissioned nuclear bomb.

Thorpe returns to Orford in December 2025 to deliver a final performance of the work, with a brand-new choral collaboration. He will perform the work in its entirety with London's SYRINX Choir in St Bartholomew's Church. With this bespoke new choral arrangement, the final chapter of Ness beautifully bookends its journey, coming home to Orford where it all began. Tickets are available from the Britten Pears Arts box office, www.brittenpearsarts.org

CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

ORFORD GENERAL STORE

	SHOP	POST OFFICE
Sunday 21 December	10am-4pm	10am-1pm, 2pm-4pm
Monday 22 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm
Tuesday 23 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm
Wednesday 24 December	8.30am-4pm	8.30am-2pm
Christmas Day	CLOSED	CLOSED
Boxing Day	CLOSED	CLOSED
Saturday 27 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-1pm, 2pm-5.30pm
Sunday 28 December	10am-4pm	10am-1pm, 2pm-4pm
Monday 29 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm
Tuesday 30 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm
Wednesday 31 December	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm
Thursday 1 January	CLOSED	CLOSED
Friday 2 January	8.30am-5.30pm	8.30am-4pm

ROYAL MAIL LAST POSTING DATES, UK AND INLAND SERVICES

Wednesday 17 December: second class and Signed for second class
Friday 19 December: Royal Mail Tracked 48, and Parcelforce Express48
Saturday 20 December: first class, first class signed for
Sunday 21 December: Royal Mail Tracked 24
Monday 22 December: Parcelforce express10, expressPM and express24
Tuesday 23 December: Special Delivery Guaranteed

Royal Mail are already advising that cards and gifts traveling outside the UK should be posted as early as possible to ensure pre-Christmas delivery (no last posting dates for international post are being published by Royal Mail). If customers are posting anything more than correspondence abroad, could they complete a customs form on the Royal Mail website. You will then be sent a QR code which you bring with you on your mobile phone when posting. Parcels to the USA are now subject to a customs levy and/or handling charge even if only gifts are being sent. There are also severe delays currently being experienced in getting parcels through the US customs process.

ORFORD MEAT SHED

Monday 22 December: 9am-3pm
Tuesday 23 December: 9am-3pm
Christmas Eve: 9am-1pm
Then CLOSED until re-opening on Wednesday 28 January 2026

PUMP STREET BAKERY

Up to and including 21 December, hours as usual
Monday 22 December: CLOSED
Tuesday 23 December: 9am-4pm
Christmas Eve: 10am-1pm (pre-order collections only)
Christmas Day: CLOSED
Boxing Day: CLOSED
Saturday 27 December: CLOSED
Sunday 28 December - 10 am - 4pm
Monday 29 December: CLOSED
Tuesday 30 Decemeber: CLOSED
Wednesday 31 December: 9am-4pm
Thursday 1 January 2026: CLOSED
From 2 January 2026, hours as usual

PUMP STREET CHOCOLATE SHOP

Up to and including 23 December, hours as usual
Christmas Eve: 9am-1pm
Christmas Day: CLOSED
Boxing Day: CLOSED
Saturday 27 to Wednesday 31 December: normal hours
Thursday 1 Jan 2026: CLOSED
From 2 Jan 2026, hours as usual

ORFORD COUNTRY MARKET

The last Country Market before Christmas will take place on Saturday 13 December, and the Market will re-open in late January.

FRIDAY SOUP LUNCH

Friday Soup Lunch at Bart's Hall will continue over the Christmas period, with lunch on Friday 12 and 19 December, and 2 January (so, only closed on Boxing Day).

THE KING'S HEAD

	Bar	Food
Thursday 18 December	12-3pm 5.30-10pm	12-2.30pm 6-10pm
Friday 19 December	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-10.30pm
Saturday 20 December	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-8.30pm
Sunday 21 December	12-8pm	12-4pm
Monday 22 December	12-3pm 5.30-10pm	12-2.30pm 6-8pm
Tuesday 23 December	12-3pm 5.30-10pm	12-2.30pm 6-8pm
Christmas Eve	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-8pm
Christmas Day	12-2pm	Drinks Only
Boxing Day	12-6pm	12-2.30pm
Saturday 27 December	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-8.30pm
Sunday 28 December	12-10pm	12-4pm Twixmas Quiz from 18.30 (pre-booked)
Monday 29 December	CLOSED all day	
Tuesday 30 December	12-3pm 5.30-10pm	12-2.30pm 6-8pm
New Year's Eve	12pm to late	12-2.30pm 6-8pm (Dinner, pre-booked only)
New Year's Day	12pm-6pm	12-2.30pm
Friday 2 January	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-8.30pm
Saturday 3 January	12-11pm	12-2.30pm 6-8.30pm
Sunday 4 January	12-8pm	12-4pm
Monday 5 January	CLOSED all day	
	Then normal hours resume	



The editors and Leiston Press wish all readers of Village Voice a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year