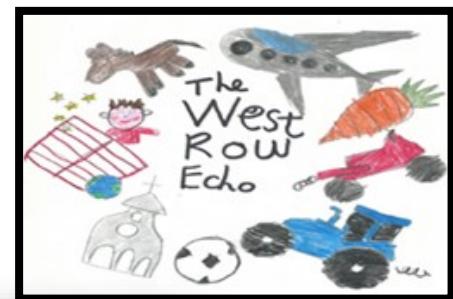


WEST ROW PARISH ECHO

Issue 58
Feb 2026 — Mar 2026



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Scan to EMAIL



DIARY DATES

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NEXT ISSUE:

Published February 2026

**Our deadline for
April/May 2026**

is:

15th March 2026 12 p.m.

Please email Helen Webber at
helen.webber60@gmail.com

100 Club Winner

Congratulations to this time's winner

Diane Rolfe

£77.00

For Further information or to join, contact Sharon The Parish clerk at
clerk@westrow-pc.gov.uk

The 100 Club helps support the printing of the Parish

<u>February</u>			
Sun 1st	St Peter's Church	Sunday Celebration	11.00 a.m.
Sun 8th	St Peter's Church	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m.
Sun 8th	St Mary's Barton Mills	Healing Service	5 p.m
Sun 15th	St Peter's Church	Sunday Celebration	11.00 a.m
Tues 17th	Baptist Chapel	Community Lunch Contact Richard 07796 616679	12.30 p.m
Fri 20th	West Row Village Hall	Fish & Chip Lunch	12.30 p.m
Sun 22nd	St Peter's Church	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m.
Sat 28th	West Row Bowls Club	Bingo	7 p.m
<u>March</u>			
Sun 1st	St Peter's Church	Sunday Celebration	11.00 a.m
Sun 8th	St Peter's Church	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m
Sun 8th	St Mary's Barton Mills	Healing Service	5 p.m
Sun 15th	St Peter's Church	Mothering Sunday Celebration	11.00 a.m
Tues 17th	Baptist Chapel	Community Lunch Contact Richard 07796 616679	12.30 p.m
Sun 22nd	St Peter's Church	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m
Fri 27th	West Row Village Hall	Fish & Chip Lunch	12.30 p.m.
Sat 28th	Bowls Club	Bingo	7 p.m
Sun 29th	St Peter's Church	Sunday Celebration	11.00 a.m
<u>April</u>			
Fri 3rd	Baptist Chapel	Good Friday Service	6.30 p.m
Sun 5th	Baptist Chapel	Easter Morning Service	10.45 a.m
Sun 5th	Baptist Chapel	Easter Evening Service	6.30 p.m

A note from the EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Welcome to first 2026 edition of the West Row Echo which I hope you will have time to read.

The Village has at least two very proactive groups. Firstly, the Parish Council always has initiatives on the go and its report on page 5 is worth a read.

Similarly the volunteers that run the Shed have always projects on the go and you'll find their report on page 14. You may even consider getting involved with this group.

If you are a nature lover, why not try attending one of the planned events at Lakenheath Fen RSPB? Should you attend an event why not submit a report with photographs, to be published in the ECHO! See page 7 for details.

As I've commented on in the past, I sincerely thank all the businesses and individuals who advertise in this publication. Without their support, the ECHO would struggle to be published as frequently as it does.

Would any villager, young or old, please consider submitting an article to be published? It could be about, what it is like to live in West Row, an unusual hobby you do, what facilities are needed in the village, basically anything that others might be interested in or to cause a discussion.

Best Wishes.

Peter Rolfe

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25	Memory Corner
26	Adverts
27/28	Children's Corner

Early Winter Quiz answers

1. Spinach
2. Tomato
3. Conference Pear
4. Seville Orange
5. Chard
6. Pink Lady Apple
7. Pineapple
8. Swede
9. Mushroom
10. Rhubarb
11. Elderberry
12. Watercress
13. Mandarin
14. Sloe
15. Victoria Plum
16. Cauliflower
17. Chinese Gooseberry
18. Sweet Potato
19. Strawberry
20. Beetroot

There were twenty one entries, eight with all 20 correct answers, and the winner, drawn by lot, was Glenis Rolfe, Eldo Road, West Row.

The Parish Echo editorial team takes no responsibility for endorsements of, or statements made in published adverts which are accepted in good faith. However, we reserve the right to refuse any advertisement, article, or item that we feel is considered inappropriate for publication.

UPCOMING EVENTS

West Row Bowls Club

BINGO NIGHT

G 53

Doors **SATURDAY** Starts
open 28th from
7pm FEB 7:30pm

GREAT PRIZES

RAFFLE



CASH PRIZES

LICENCED BAR

For more details call - Merv 01842 861618

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Posh Petals Spring Flower Arranging Class

Saturday 14th March, 10.30-12.30pm

Posh Petals Workshop, Willowshade,
Eldo Road, West Row, IP28 8PY

£35

Early
bird

£40

Booking after
21/02/2026

TO BOOK CALL

Wendy 07870106175



Includes all materials & refreshments.
Payable on booking.



Valentines Coffee & Cake & Quiz

Sat 14th February 2026

Mildenhall Social Club Pavilion

2pm - 4pm

In aid of Mildenhall & District

Poppy Appeal

£5 in advance for catering
purposes

Marion [07751196867](tel:07751196867)

Helen. [07309114235](tel:07309114235)

West Row Bowls Club

BINGO NIGHT

G 53

SATURDAY
Doors 28th Starts
open from
7pm MARCH 7:30pm

GREAT PRIZES

RAFFLE



CASH PRIZES LICENCED BAR

For more details call - Merv 01842 861618

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Here's Wishing Everybody A Happy New Year - So, what have we been up to lately as a Parish Council

Cemetery

We are now at a position where Suffolk County Council have very nearly transferred a parcel of land on Chapel Road to the Parish Council for the creation of our Non-Denomination Cemetery. This of course will mean a lot of work and expense for the Parish Council going forward.

Neighbourhood Plan

This is close to completion, and we hope for it to be published sometime in 2026.

Remembrance Services

The Sunday Remembrance Service was well attended and as is the tradition in our village we also had a Armistice Day, 11th November where the children from West Row Academy joined many residents to show their respects, remembering the fallen from the village. This time for the first time we had "Joey The War Horse" along with The River of Tears created by our local team of ladies.

Christmas Celebrations

I am pleased to say although the weather was a big challenge, once again you all turned out to support the Tree Lighting Event on St. Peter's Green. It was very pleasing to see the children from West Row Academy singing carols to us. Santa made a surprise visit to the Village Christmas Bazaar and then later made his way around the village with his handful of Little Helpers handing out treats and bringing joy to the children of the village.

The Parish Council will be looking at ways in which we can improve future Christmas events, if any residents have any fresh ideas, please contact either the Clerk or any of the Parish Councillors.

(You could of course come to any of the regular Parish Council meetings on the third Wednesday of the month or pop in on the third Saturday of the month 10 am to 11 am for a coffee and a chat with Councillors at the monthly Council Surgery).

All the donations we received at our Christmas events have been gifted to the Village Hall specifically to assist in the maintenance of the well used Children's Play Area.

Public Footpaths

Some of you may have noticed two footpaths in the village (Footpath 6 and Footpath 7) which have been upgraded with new surface,s it has come to my attention that there has been negative comments particularly on social media, regarding costs etc., of this work. I would like to make sure you all know that neither the Parish Council, District or County paid for this work. It was funded entirely by the developer aof our new housing as a pre-condition of the development.

Parish Keeper

We can announce that starting in Spring 2026 we will have our own Parish Keeper to maintain and repair various amenities throughout the village. The scope of work the Keeper will be responsible for is still being developed, so if anybody has any thoughts of any areas in village that require some TLC, please contact The Parish Clerk or any Councillor.

Defibrillator

The Telephone Box which houses one of our defibrillators had a pane of glass broken. I would like to give a big thank you to Kevin Peachey who supplied and replaced the glass panel and refused to take any payment. It's thanks to people like him and others who help us to maintain the facilities throughout the village.

Dates for your Diary

6th April, Easter Monday Easter Egg Hunt to take place near the Village Play Area more details to follow

Remember: Parish Councillors meet 3rd Wednesday 7pm in the Parish Office (the old Outdoor Bowls Club). Members of the public are most welcome. Ideas of what you think we should consider. Contact Sharon Vale – Parish Clerk.

Parish Surgeries are usually held in the Parish Office, 3rd Saturday of each month, 10am-11am. All welcome to attend and to bring your concerns to the Parish Councillors' attention. If you'd like clarification on anything the PC is involved in, just come along and ask.

LAKENHEATH FEN RSPB

In midwinter it seems a good idea to shine a spotlight on three birds that visit us just for the colder months. Two of them are thrush species- closely related to our more familiar Blackbirds and Song thrushes that we see in our parks and gardens- and these are the Redwing and Fieldfare. The third- the Waxwing- is scarcer, much less reliable (most winters there aren't many around) and they have a curious affinity for urban places, rather than our countryside.

You might encounter Redwing and Fieldfare first in October, and it's usually Redwing that get here first- they migrate here from Scandinavia and eastern Europe to escape harsh weather. Being smaller than Fieldfare, they are not quite so robust and seem to need to escape rough weather sooner than their more substantial cousins, who might find it easier to stick it out for longer due to their larger size. A week or two later sees the first Fieldfare arrive, and the best way to detect them is to listen out as they fly overhead. Redwings have a high-pitched 'seep' call which they repeat, and when they first arrive you are quite likely to hear them overnight as they migrate around the clock and Redwings never seem to stop calling. They get their name for the rusty-red patch under their wings- if birds had armpits this is where you could describe it as being- but when they are perched with their wings folded you can often still see a bit of this red patch.

Fieldfare are darker and more serious looking birds- their heavy black eyestripe on a stone-grey head and harsh chattering call makes them seem a bit stern. If you disturb them, they sound like they are telling you off! Like Redwings they are sociable, and it is common to see them guzzling berries in groups on hedgerow bushes, especially Hawthorn. They will also come to gardens to feed on windfall apples and pears where they are often joined by other thrushes such as Blackbirds. Both species are big fans of earthworms, so you may see them in fields and meadows that have not been treated too heavily with pesticides.

Although Redwing and Fieldfare are quite common to see in winter, Waxwings are not- though we do get 'influx' years where particularly cold conditions on the continent cause mass immigrations into the UK, and then nature lovers are in for a real treat! Unlike the thrushes discussed earlier that are most often found in rural settings, Waxwings love berries of any kind and are quite confident around people. As a result, many groups of them are found in good years in places like supermarket car parks, industrial estates and urban gardens- so long as there are plenty of berries for them to gorge themselves on. They are a stunning bird- with a ground colour of warm peachy-brown with a black facial mask, white eyebrows and striking red, yellow and black wingtips. In fact, the red patch is what gives them their name- as it looks like old-fashioned red wax used to seal letters. If the berry supply is good, a group can spend weeks in one spot before having to move on to find more fruit to gorge on!

In the remaining weeks of winter, do keep an eye out for these winter visitors while they are still here. Redwing and Fieldfare are a common sight at RSPB Lakenheath Fen, especially on the wooded Brandon Fen trail (they are often rummaging through the leaf litter under the trees). But if you pop into your nearest town or supermarket car park, do keep an eye out for the jazzy Waxwings too, which really do look far too exotic for our British climate!

With best wishes for a safe and peaceful winter,

Heidi Jones (Visitor Experience Officer, RSPB Lakenheath Fen).



WAXWING PHOTO CREDIT: PAT ROLPH

LAKENHEATH FEN RSPB DIARY DATES

Places for all events need to be booked online- please visit <https://bit.ly/LakenheathFenEvents> to read more and book [tickets](#)

Moth Mornings

27 February, 27 March, 24 April, 29 May (10am to 11am)

Learn more about the amazing world of moths- join us to admire what we catch in our harmless trap.

RSPB members £5 (£2.50 for Under 18's); non-RSPB members £6 (£3 for Under 18's).

Bittern Walks

Saturday 25 April, Sunday 17 May (9:30am-12:30pm)

In 1995 the reserve was created to provide a home for beautiful but threatened Bitterns. Their booming calls are thankfully now a common sound in Spring- and on these walks we will be looking for them during peak season.

RSPB members £12 (£6 for Under 18's); non-RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18's).

Dawn Chorus Guided Walk

Sunday 3 May (5-8am)

A bright and early start should be rewarded with a wide variety of birdsong from our resident and summer visitors- we should hear a range of common species as well as scarcer birds joining in such as Bittern and Cuckoo, typical of the habitat here. Come along to learn a little or just appreciate this natural wonder. Coffee included afterwards!

RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18's); non-RSPB members £18 (£9 for Under 18's).

Hobby Walks

Saturday 9 May, Sunday 24 May (1-4pm)

From May onwards, we are graced with the presence of these elegant raptors for the summer, and when they first arrive there can be dozens here at once. Come along to one of the UK's best reserves for spotting them, with a knowledgeable guide on hand.

RSPB members £12 (£6 for Under 18's); non-RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18's).

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Historically, the 48th FW has been the foundation of USAFE's combat capability and remains so today. The Liberty Wing led the El Dorado Canyon raids into Libya in 1986 and was the first F-111 fighter unit to deploy to the Gulf during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Liberty Wing also anchored NATO forces during Operations Deliberate Force and Allied Force. Since September 11, 2001, the 48th FW has played a key role in antiterrorism operations, flying combat missions, and providing combat support in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.



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THURS 7.30-9.30pm

Jive Class – contact Caroline 07886 492772

FRI 12.30pm

Monthly Fish & Chip Lunch & Social - Contact Roz Hamill 07887 668145 or Rosalind_hamill@yahoo.co.uk

FRI 5.30-7.30pm

Martial Arts Training with Darren Hart. Children & Adults welcome – contact Darren on 07717 886917

Hall Fees: £15 per hour (residents of parish)

£18 per hour – non residents

Extra Charge for Bar & Sun Lounge Hire

SEE PAGE 11 FOR CHRISTMAS BAZAAR UPDATE/THANK YOU

WEST ROW VILLAGE HALL

Thank you to everyone who visited the 1st Village Hall Christmas Bazaar; it was a huge success! Thank you Father Christmas for taking time out of your busy schedule to drop by with sweets for the children!

Raffle Winners were Zena Wilcox (Large Hamper); Carolyn Nunn-Miller (drinks hamper); Teresa Gooch-Taylorballs (Fruit/Veg Hamper); Fran Miller (drinks hamper); Kelly Taylor (Choccy Hamper); Sue Holland (Sainsbury Vouchers) & Heidi Pople (Baileys).

We will doing it all again this year!

NEWS FROM JORDAN MILLWARD <https://www.askjordon.co.uk/>

Why AI Cannot Fix an Education System Built for 1920

The debate about AI in education misses the point entirely. The issue isn't the technology. The issue is the education system itself, a system that has remained largely unchanged for over a century.

A System Frozen in Time

Our education system hasn't changed much since the 1920s really. We've just added different subjects or incorporated slightly different techniques, tweaking around the edges while the fundamental structure remains intact. Research highlights that students learn more through workshops and activities, through the actual experience of learning, but instead we teach in a didactic way. Not because teachers want to, but because the sector wants everything standardised, measured, and controlled.

AI could give teachers back so much time, freeing them from administrative burdens to focus on what actually matters in education. Instead, schools are aiming to make the system more homogeneous, more efficient at doing exactly what we've always done. This isn't all schools, you have some great teachers and great schools doing brilliant work, but this is the system at large, the dominant pattern that shapes educational practice across the country.

The Deeper Problem

Honestly, education at all levels has faced these challenges for decades before AI arrived on the scene. Over-commodification has diminished learning, reducing teaching to a mere shell of what it should be. Standardisation has prioritised bureaucracy over creativity, leading many teachers to leave not for lower pay but for less favourable conditions, for environments where they can no longer actually teach in ways they know are effective.

This mirrors a broader trend in how we approach complex problems. We favour quick fixes over substantial investments that yield long-term benefits, choosing the path that looks efficient on a spreadsheet over the one that actually works. Industry shapes learning not for individual benefit but to reduce their own training costs, treating education as a pipeline for pre-trained workers rather than a space for human development. CPD often functions more as a marketing tool than an educational one, box-ticking rather than genuine professional growth.

Continued on Page 12

Continued from Page 11

Schools focus on cost-cutting rather than improving student experience or learning outcomes. The shift from student-focused to accountancy-focused education shows up everywhere, in every teaching method, every policy decision, every strategic priority. We've moved from asking what helps students learn to asking what costs less to deliver.

We talk about the next generation critically, pointing to their lack of attention and declining standards, but the system they're being taught in just doesn't prepare them adequately for the future as it stands. We blame students for failing to thrive in conditions designed to produce compliance rather than understanding.

What Real Change Looks Like

To change it we need fundamental shifts in how we assess learning. Rather than looking for recall and comprehension, testing whether students can repeat back what we've told them, we need to evaluate thoughtfulness and genuine understanding. What questions did they ask in approaching a problem? What was their method for investigating it? How did they evaluate their approach? What did they recognise as missing from their analysis?

We should assess core skills through competency exercises that demonstrate actual ability rather than memorised knowledge. Embed project and group activities more thoroughly throughout curricula, making collaborative learning the norm rather than the exception. See thoughtfulness, those building blocks of philosophical inquiry, and critical thinking, the practices of evaluation and reflection, as two halves of a whole rather than separate skills to be tested independently.

The textbook as a resource should still be valid, but the method of teaching it should have died a death a long time ago. We need to move toward a more facilitative model of education that guides rather than instructs, that informs students why the resources are valuable and doesn't expect everything to be memorised and regurgitated on command.

Because unfortunately many people weren't able to memorise information before, but they could understand it when given the chance to engage with it properly. We haven't really considered understanding in this process, only comprehension, treating these as interchangeable when they represent fundamentally different ways of knowing. That distinction matters enormously for how we think about what education should accomplish.

The Real Question

We need the system to evolve to really incorporate AI in meaningful ways. And honestly, we needed this evolution before AI even arrived.

The question isn't whether students should use ChatGPT for their essays. The question is whether we'll finally build an education system that prepares humans for meaningful lives, for genuine participation in a complex world, or whether we'll just automate the inadequacies of 1920 with the efficiency of 2025, doing the wrong thing faster and more consistently than ever before.





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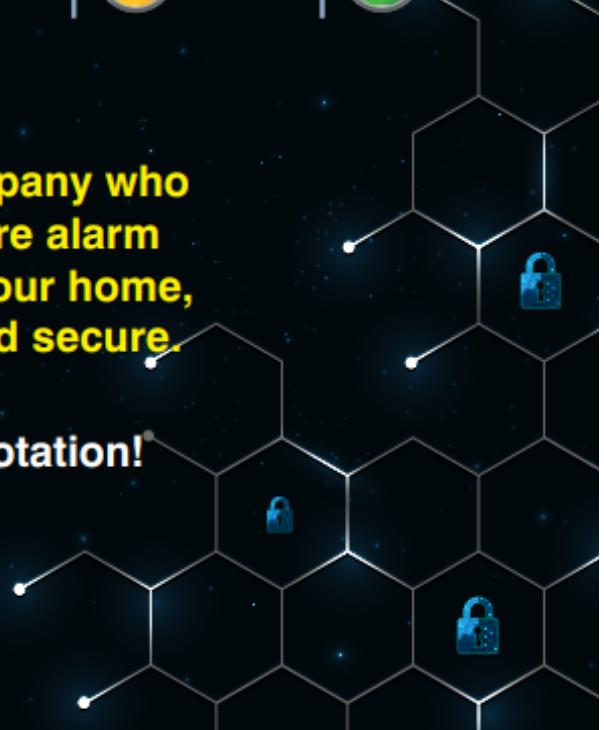
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WELCOME 2026 where we hope new Friends of The Shed will help with our objectives:

“To provide a safe place for anyone and to pass on all surplus food we are fortunate to receive.”



The Shed maintains several garden areas: Our fruit orchard, vegetable plots, flowers and shrubs, and a herb garden. We also have Raised Beds for those who find bending a little difficult.

We are constantly striving to improve our facilities with easy access to most plots.

Our facilities include Disabled Toilets, our Big Circle available for social events (free of charge), A Stable Block consisting of a Kitchen, Tea Room and recently refurbished Store Room. We have a Tool Shed, various storage containers and plenty of well used garden implements.

We have electricity and a bore hole providing water for the gardens. But we do bring our own drinking water.

Activities you might be interested in are: Gardening within your means, helpful “experts” to encourage when needed.

We are not confined to The Shed space. We supported the West Row Village Hall Christmas Fayre to raise funds to maintain our excellent Play Park.



We meet: Tues, Thurs and Saturdays from 10am,. Weather permitting FMI: Contact Roz Hamill 01638 715329

Other recent events were a Christmas social for our Trustees and Volunteers, plus invited OAPs who enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner courtesy of The Rising Sun, Isleham.



We also supported St. Mary's Church, Mildenhall in their successful Guinness World Record bid for the most Nativities in one place. They smashed it.

We arrange social events throughout the year. Our next Open Day on the calendar will be our Spring Fling, sometime in April. Watch our Facebook page for further details. There will be food !!!!

We hold an Annual Harvest Festival in the Autumn, and this year we hope to host Santa in a Grotto where children can talk to Santa and adults can partake of Mulled Wine and mince  pies. There might be a free gift for the little ones.

Little Shed is extremely popular at our front gate, where surplus produce is made available to all, 24x7. If you can afford to donate, that is much appreciated. We do have running costs, supplies, electricity, and insurances. All have to be paid for.

We appreciate the patrons who donate generously to cover those who have a small budget. Our policy is that nobody should go hungry. We may not be able to provide your exact preferences, but there will always be something to tide you over.

Suffolk Police



Keeping Suffolk Safe

Local Police Priorities – Forest Heath Police:

Our current priorities focus on:

Reducing anti-social behaviour in public spaces

Tackling rural crime, including theft and wildlife offences

Improving road safety across Forest Heath

We work closely with local communities to address these issues and keep Suffolk safe.

Stay Safe This Winter:

Plan your journeys and check weather conditions before travelling

Keep your home secure: lock doors and windows, use timers for lights

Be visible: wear reflective clothing when walking or cycling

Drive carefully: slow down on icy roads and maintain safe distances

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A school of which we can be proud.

As Chair of Governors at West Row Academy, I am privileged to witness first-hand the vital role our school plays in the life of our village and how all involved at the Academy are working tirelessly for it to become an institution of which every resident feels proud. A good school is more than just a place of learning—it is an asset that enriches the whole community, shapes the future for our children and strengthens the bonds between friends, neighbours, new residents and local businesses.

It's natural for any school to face challenges and like all organisations, we don't always get everything right. However, I am proud to say that West Row Academy has made significant improvements in recent years. Our dedicated staff, enthusiastic pupils, and supportive families have all contributed to a positive and forward-looking environment and are determined that the school should act as a hub for village life with school events and activities bringing residents together and in so doing fostering a sense of belonging and pride in our community.

An outstanding school with a good name, benefits everyone in the village. Homes near high performing schools are often more desirable, with families willing to pay a premium to live within the catchment area. This increased demand can raise property values and help homes retain their worth, even during economic downturns. Schools provide jobs for teachers, support staff and service providers, assisting in ensuring economic stability for the village. Local businesses also benefit from increased activity related to school events. A good school creates a safe, nurturing environment for children and families, offering extracurricular activities and cultural events that enrich village life. Outstanding schools make villages more attractive to families, helping to sustain population levels and support local services and amenities.

But a school's success is not built in isolation. It thrives when the whole village takes pride in it, talks it up, and gets involved. Whether it's volunteering, attending events, or simply sharing positive stories, every kind word and supportive action helps to build the school's reputation and morale. Unfortunately, negative gossip and unkind comments on social media can undermine the hard work of pupils and staff alike. While it's important to raise concerns and seek improvement, let's do so constructively and directly, rather than through rumour or criticism online. Our children are watching and learning from the way we, as adults, talk about their school.

I invite every resident of West Row to join us in making West Row Academy not just a good school, but an outstanding one. Let's celebrate our achievements, support one another and work together to ensure our school remains a source of pride for the whole village.

Thank you for your continued support.

Evan King

Chair of Governors, West Row Academy



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WEST ROW

BOWLS CLUB NEWS

The Indoor season is just over half way through and the club has had a fair amount of success in the County Leagues and individuals in knockout competitions. It is pleasing to see bowlers with only a season or two of experience holding their own in County matches.

As a reminder, anyone who wishes to try out the sport should come along to the Club on a Wednesday evening, from 6.00 p.m. - 700p.m. The first five coaching sessions are offered free of charge and then anyone wishing to join is asked to pay a Beginner membership fee of £20. This entitles a Beginner member to practise at any time the Club is open and a rink is free. A rink fee of £2.00 per hour is charged.

All bowling equipment is provided at the Club. Flat soled shoes that have only been worn indoors are required but the club also has a selection of shoes that can be borrowed.

Once a Beginner member feels ready for some more formal competitive games, a Bowls Drive is held every Wednesday 7.15 p.m.-9.00 p.m. with members expected to wear approved bowls clothing, details of which are posted on club notice boards.

On March 1st, the annual Yardstick bowls tournament is planned with preferential selection given to Beginner bowlers. Spectators are welcome.

Also as a reminder, the Club holds monthly Bingo sessions on a Saturday and the Club also runs a Ladies Darts team and a Dominoes team.

The Club is open most evenings so why not drop in to see what the Club has on offer and maybe give bowls a try!

For information regarding any aspect of the club please contact Club Coach, Peter Rolfe, tel: 07501 640328 or email:

peter.rolfe3@btopenworld.com

St Peter's Church West Row



Churchwardens: Beryl Austin 01638 712708 - Debbie Eaglen
Elders: Tricia Leverington

CONTACT:

Vicar: Rev'd Mark McCaghrey
Tel.: 01638 495001
Email:
mark.larkandlee@outlook.com

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Christmas activities and services at St. Peter's as the village celebrated Christmas, with carols, bible readings and fun things for families. It was a particular joy to welcome three children from West Row Primary Academy who read some of the bible readings at our Carol Service exceptionally well, and are a credit to their families and school.

Now that the Christmas Tree and decorations have been put away for another year, it is easy to think that we are done with everything Christmassy. But may I invite you this year to hang on to Christmas just a bit longer in 2026.

My wife, Fiona, dislikes the dark mornings and dark evenings. This time of the year each morning she leaves in the dark and each evening she gets home in the dark, even though she only works in Brandon. She is therefore pleased that today is a little brighter than yesterday and tomorrow will be brighter than today, with the hope of more hours of daylight to come. This hope keeps her going through the darkest of nights.

At the heart of Christmas is of course the belief that 2000 years ago something significant happened, and that in a dark world the true light was revealed. That's why we have the candle at the Christingle service with the Key Stage 1 children from the school. That's why the reading from chapter 1 of John's gospel was repeated at every Christmas Service "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world".

When things are at their darkest, that's when we need light. 2026 has begun very dark, without a clear sense that things are going to get any easier any time soon. But let's not forget, when the bible was written 2000 years ago the world was no less dark. Those who first read John's words weren't living an easy life and didn't expect everything to work out OK just like that, just as we don't.

But what they did know is that the presence of Jesus in their lives brought light that the world's darkness could not destroy and gave hope that in the future the darkness would be dispelled, just as Fiona has hope that more light is coming as she travels in the dark to and from work. As you enter 2026, do you have that light of Jesus in your life that gives hope in the darkness of our world?

DOWN THE ALLOTMENTS

Seasonal Tasks on the Allotment: February & March



Your Guide to a Productive Start to the Growing Year

As winter's chill begins to loosen its grip and the days slowly start to lengthen, February and March offer allotment holders a crucial window to prepare for a bountiful year ahead. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting out, these months are full of opportunities to get ahead, nurture your plot, and set the stage for a fruitful growing season.

February: Laying the Foundations

1. Plot Preparation

While the weather is often unpredictable, there's much to be done. If the ground is not waterlogged or frozen, begin digging over vacant beds, incorporating well-rotted manure or compost to enrich the soil. This helps improve structure and fertility, giving your future crops the best start.

2. Planning and Ordering

Take time to plan your crop rotation, order seeds and seed potatoes, and draw up a sowing schedule. February is an ideal month for poring over seed catalogues and plotting out what will go where.

3. Pruning and Maintenance

Prune autumn-fruiting raspberries down to ground level, cut back currant bushes and gooseberries, and tidy up fruit trees. Remove any dead or diseased wood and keep an eye out for signs of pests. Repair sheds, clean and sharpen tools, and wash pots ready for spring sowing.

4. Early Sowing and Chitting

If you have a greenhouse, cold frame, or even a sunny windowsill, start sowing hardy crops such as broad beans, onions, and early peas in modules or trays. Begin chitting seed potatoes by placing them in a cool, bright spot to encourage strong shoots, ready for planting in March or April.

March: The Growing Year Begins

1. Sowing Under Cover

With a little extra warmth, you can sow tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, and salad leaves indoors or in a heated propagator. Outdoors, hardy vegetables like parsnips, beetroot, carrots, leeks, and spinach can be sown as the soil starts to warm up but cover with cloches or fleece if frost threatens.

2. Planting Out

March is the traditional time to plant out onion sets, shallots, and early potatoes, especially towards the end of the month when the soil is workable. Garlic cloves can also go in if not already planted in autumn.

3. Fruit Care

Mulch fruit bushes and trees with compost or well-rotted manure, taking care not to smother stems. Feed with a potassium-rich fertiliser to encourage flower and fruit production. Check ties and supports, especially after winter storms.

4. Weed and Pest Management

Weeds will start to appear as temperatures rise, so tackle them early by hoeing or hand-pulling before they get established. Keep an eye out for slugs, snails, and overwintering pests, removing hiding places and using organic deterrents where possible.

Final Tips

Keep a gardening diary to track sowing dates, weather conditions, and successes or challenges.

Don't rush onto the soil if it's too wet – you'll do more harm than good. Wait for a dry spell for digging and planting.

Enjoy the process! These early months are all about hope and preparation, setting the tone for a rewarding year ahead.

With careful planning and steady work, your allotment will be well on its way to flourishing as spring unfolds.

Happy gardening!



From the Pastor's Desk

evan@westrowbaptistchurch.org.uk.

In our village of West Row, many seek happiness in possessions, achievements, entertainment or other fleeting pleasures. Yet, the Bible shows us in Psalm 1:1-2 that it concerns itself with our genuine happiness. There we read, ***Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night*** The first word of the psalm “blessed” may also be translated as “happy” and these opening verses of the psalm shows us that a major aspect of our happiness relates directly to our relationship with God and how seriously we take His Word, the Bible.

The Bible teaches us that true happiness—lasting, soul-satisfying joy—is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our deepest need is not for more things, but for reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. We are blessed—not because of our own goodness, but because Christ has lived, died, and risen for all those who repent of their sin and trust in Him. Happiness is not found by following the ways of the world, but by turning to Christ, who is the fulfilment of God’s promises and the true “blessed man” of Psalm 1.

When we trust in Christ, we are united to Him by faith. His righteousness becomes ours, and we are invited to delight in God’s Word—not as a burden, but as a source of life and joy. The Bible points us to Jesus, who said, ***I am the way, the truth, and the life*** (John 14:6). In Him, we find forgiveness, peace, and the happiness our hearts long for.

Psalm 1:1-2 describes the blessed person as one who “delights in the law of the Lord” and meditates on it day and night. “The law of the Lord” means all of God’s revealed Word—the Bible, which testifies to Christ from beginning to end.

To delight in God’s Word is to treasure it, to seek Christ in its pages, and to let it shape our lives. As we read, pray, and reflect on the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit works in us, draws us closer to Jesus and transforms us to be more like Him. God’s Word is not just information; it is the living voice of God, bringing comfort, guidance, and joy.

Psalm 1 gives us a vivid picture in verse 3. There we read, ***He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*** Imagine a sturdy oak tree beside the River Lark, its branches reaching skyward, leaves shimmering in the sunlight, its roots reaching deep into the water. No matter the season, the tree flourishes because it is connected to its source. So, it is with those who are rooted in Christ and nourished by God’s Word. Our lives may face storms and droughts, but when our hearts are anchored in Jesus and fed by Scripture, we remain steadfast and fruitful. The happiness we find in Christ is not temporary but enduring—like the sturdy oak by the River Lark, thriving beside the water.

So, whatever momentary pleasures this world entices you with, please remember true happiness is not found in what we possess, but in whom we know. In Christ, and through God’s Word, we discover a joy that endures through every season of life.

Evan

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” John 14 v 6

FIRST QUIZ OF 2026

All answers are Food or Drink

e.g. Meat in a boot? (F4, 10)

ANS. Beef Wellington

1. Mends shoes? (F7)	ANS.....
2. Dark fabric? (D 5, 6)	ANS.....
3. Cooked State? (F5, 6)	ANS.....
4. Mix up to use as rent? (D9)	ANS.....
5. Seed to tell off? (F3,5)	ANS.....
6. Fat drink from the cow? (D 4, 5)	ANS.....
7. Criticise fancy? (F7)	ANS.....
8. Medusa meets French author? (F10)	ANS.....
9. NATO letter gets raincoat? (D6, 3)	ANS.....
10. Resentful colour? (D 6, 5)	ANS.....
11. Sounds like volcanic currency? (F5,5)	ANS.....
12. Cricket ground gets prong? (D8)	ANS.....
13. Sticky lady of the night? (F7,4)	ANS.....
14. I ring 'em up on melee in chaos? (F5, 8, 3)	ANS.....
15. Jet stream? (D7,5)	ANS.....
16. Sozzled fish? (F7, 7)	ANS.....
17. Useful follows point? (D6)	ANS.....
18. Sexy canine? (F3, 3)	ANS.....
19. Hat on composer almost gains duck? (D10)	ANS.....
20. For a mo with business? (D8)	ANS.....

NAME OF ENTRANT.....
ADDRESS.....
Contact tel. no

N.B. PLEASE POST YOUR ENTRY IN THE BOWLS CLUB SILVER LETTER BOX
SITUATED ON THE FENCE BY 22nd FEBRUARY 2026

MEMORY CORNER

Any photos that you would like to share from the past,
please contact Helen Webber at helen.webber60@gmail.com



MORLEY'S GREY COACHES
BEECHES ROAD

THE PLOUGH
PUBLIC HOUSE
CHURCH ROAD



few could afford the luxury of a car in the early days. This Model T Ford, seen with Bargate Farm in the background, is being driven by James Dunlop of Beeches Farm. Dick Rolfe, the undertaker, is in the middle and William J. Ford, the engineer, is on the right. (Mr W. Bell)

ALL PHOTOS FROM THE
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Pine cone creatures



You will need

- Pinecones
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- Various things (as many natural as possible) to make your animal, such as:
 - Leaves
 - Acorn cups
 - Berries or googly eyes

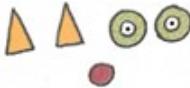


Always check what berries are before you pick them because some can be harmful to people!

- 1 Decide what animal you want to make. If you want it to stand, pick a pine cone that will stay upright and make and glue on the feet first.



- 2 Add legs or wings and eyes and ears using the materials you've collected.



PVA should stick most things, but ask an adult to help if you need to use a hot glue gun.

Here are a few examples to get you inspired...



mouse



fox



owl

Acorn cups with berries or googly eyes in the centre make great eyes!

Spring flower spotter



Snowdrop



Daffodil



Wood-sorrel



Winter aconite



Wood anemone



Bluebell



Primrose



Wild garlic (ramsons)



Cowslip



Lesser celandine