

FELSTED

# FOCUS

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 29

SPRING 2026

A FREE complimentary magazine or £1 where purchased

QUARTERLY



## INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

- COUNCILS
- SCHOOLS
- CLUBS
- RECIPE
- EVENTS



# JOIN THE FOCUS TEAM

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March**

**8.30-10.30am**

**The Hub at Sparlings Farm, Felsted CM6 3LB**

**Are you a Felsted resident, who would like to contribute to our wonderful magazine?**

Our editorial team is made up entirely of volunteers, and just like our beautiful parish, we're looking to grow.

If you're interested in getting involved, we'd love to meet you!

Join us for coffee, and to learn more about how you could help...

No experience is necessary - just enthusiasm!

If you'd like to come along, or for more info, please get in touch!

**RSVP to**  
[felstedmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:felstedmagazine@gmail.com)



## Note from the Editor

As we move out of winter and begin to look towards spring, it feels like a good moment to pause, take stock, and look ahead to what the coming months might bring for Felsted. Christmas and the New Year are now behind us, but the sense of connection they bring doesn't have to be. In villages like ours, it's the everyday moments - the events, the conversations, the shared projects - that really shape how it feels to live here.

This edition looks forward to the season ahead, with news, plans, and opportunities to get involved in village life. Whether it's trying something new, supporting a local group, or simply turning up and saying hello, every small contribution helps keep the parish thriving.

Thank you, as always, to everyone who contributes, reads, and supports this magazine. Here's to brighter days, lighter evenings, and a busy, hopeful spring ahead.

*Hope Alexander*  
[felstedmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:felstedmagazine@gmail.com)

## COME AND JOIN US!



# FELSTED WRITERS CLUB

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

**8.30-10.30am**

**The Hub at Sparlings Farm, Felsted CM6 3LB**

**Do you love, or would you like, to write?**  
Are you interested in connecting with other local writers, for feedback on your ideas or to improve your writing skills?

We'd love to welcome you to our first informal meeting of 2026!

Join us for coffee and a chat about all things writing, whatever your skill level and genre. No pressure to share your work, just come and enjoy good company and conversation with those who share your interest.

If you'd like to come along, or just want to know more, just get in touch!

**RSVP to**  
[felstedwriters@gmail.com](mailto:felstedwriters@gmail.com)



# Felsted Friendship Club



The members of Felsted Friendship Club would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2026.

We have had a busy and enjoyable autumn, starting in September with Andy's Vocals. Andy Farrow, who comes from a local family, entertained us with songs old and new, from ballads to rock'n'roll. We were tapping our feet and singing along, and we all had a great afternoon.

October's talk was Days of Dolly Blue and Izal by Brian Carline. Retired Headmaster Brian recalled the products that our mothers used when we were young, and told us tales of the antics he and his friends got up to when they were boys. Amid much laughter, this brought back memories of our own childhoods as we could all remember getting into similar scrapes to his.

Also in October we had an outing to Hunter's Meet. Our coach arrived at Hatfield Heath in time for a two course luncheon, with desserts to follow if we wanted them. Then there was an afternoon of music, singing and dancing, and we arrived back in Felsted in time for tea. We all had a great day out.

Saturday, 1st November was our Coffee Morning held in the Memorial Hall. There were stalls of tombola, bottle tombola, cakes, books and puzzles, guess the weight of the cake and the number of sweets in a jar, plus a raffle for which we received prizes from several local people and businesses. Thank you to everyone for your support; we raised almost £400 for our club funds..

## Future meetings

- 16 January – Cookery Demonstration - Alice McLaren
- 20 February – Keep Fit in your Chair – Karen Wheatley

If you are interested in coming along to one of our meetings, please do contact Diane Denny on 01376 583994 or Sue King 01371 821411.

The Club usually meets every third Friday of each month in the Memorial Hall at 2.15 pm, unless stated otherwise. New members are always welcome.

# Felsted WI

Winter seems to be creeping up now, with dark evenings, misty mornings and a definite chill in the air.

Our ladies have had an enjoyable time learning how to make festive autumn wreaths. A picture of some of the ladies with their attractive finished articles below.

We also had a visit from a lady called Sandra Gold-Wood, who told us the true stories of the Canary Girls, from WW1 and WW2, who helped make bombs and munitions for the war effort with dangerous chemicals that would stain their skin and hair yellow. Sometimes causing illnesses to them, also, explosions that could kill them, after making and handling these different chemicals.

We were so moved by Sandra's story that we included a yellow poppy in our WI wreath this year at the memorial. The lady herself has written a book about these brave women, who are not remembered in November, as many other groups are. Therefore, we will remember them each year for their unsung courage, by adding a yellow poppy to our wreath.

For more information please contact Penny Lewison 07825 312829



## Felsted Memorial Hall

How are you all?

I hope you enjoyed the festivities and New Year. It soon goes doesn't it.

The Memorial Hall has been busy over the holiday period. There was a lovely Christmas Fayre on the 7th December, raising funds for the Ronald McDonald children's charity. Lots of people braved the chilly rain but found a warm welcome and hot food to buy. Santa was very busy too! Outside was a Shetland pony and his owner. The pony was cleverly disguised as a reindeer, but he didn't like it and kept shaking the headdress off!

The Friendship club held their coffee morning and Christmas buffet lunch, both a great success.

Some groups closed down over the Christmas holiday, but all have resumed normal service and party bookings have picked up too. Of course panto rehearsals carried on, and as I write this, we are preparing for our 4 performances at the end of January and beginning of February. Both Saturday nights have sold out and there are a few tickets left on both Fridays. All proceeds go to the upkeep of the Memorial Hall.

There is still a lot of work to be done in the hall. The bar and Hauxwell area will be refurbished and what was the Committee room, is going to be transformed into a props and costume room. The committee do this themselves, and as most of them work full time, progress is slow! Thank you to the committee for working so hard.

Well spring is just around the corner, lets hope for some better weather! If you, or someone you know have a party in the planning, don't forget to give us a call for our excellent venue.

Take care of yourselves. Until next time.

Hazel Fox

## Felsted Holy Cross Church



### A WARM WELCOME

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ALWAYS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE GROUPS

FOUR AT 4 | 4PM ON 4TH SUNDAY  
IN FLITCH GREEN COMMUNITY HALL



9AM SERVICES ON THE 2ND, 4TH & 5TH SUNDAYS

[WWW.FELSTEDCHURCH.ORG.UK](http://WWW.FELSTEDCHURCH.ORG.UK)



# The Fuzzy Mutt

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 The Fuzzy Mutt

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Essex, CM27 0SP



## United Reformed Church

Dear Friends,

I hope it's not too late to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2026. We had a very successful 2025 which enabled us to give donations of £500.00 each to our chosen charities – MIND and Havens Hospice.

We held our Gift Service on the 14th December, when representatives from the 2 charities received the cheques and told us how our donations helped them to continue their great work.

We also continue to support Braintree MENCAP, a local charity we have supported for well over 40 years, by presenting the with gifts from under the Christmas tree for their parties and coffee mornings, and a financial donation of the offertory from that morning.

Although we are a Village Church, we rely on our dedicated team of volunteers, to enable us to hold social events, Church breakfasts, coffee mornings and even Do It Yourself services on occasions. If you would like to join us for any of these events, then please contact the number below for more details.

Our next Church breakfast is on the 8th March at 10.30am which will be followed by a short service, and the next social event will be our Games and Quiz afternoon on the 27th March at 2pm, when we will be serving pancakes.

At this moment in time, we still have to make the decision as to whether our Church will be joining the URC Mission Partnership – this is a group of local Churches who if joined together, could help each other in the future.

The Women's Guild sessions start on the 2nd March at 2pm and then continue weekly, until the end of October – the programmes will include speakers, entertainers and refreshments.

Any queries please contact

Diane 01376 583994



## Felsted Parish Council

### Inconsiderate Parking

Over the past few months the PC have received various complaints about vehicles parking in a manner that inconveniences others. When you park please do take care that you are not leaving your vehicle in a way that will restrict the visibility of others or that will block the pavements. In order to ensure the safety of pedestrians enough space needs to be left for those in wheelchairs or pushing buggies to pass without having to enter the road in order to do so. The PC thanks you for your cooperation in this matter.

### Equipment Repairs

At a recent PC meeting repairs to various items were discussed. An attendee at the meeting later said that they had never thought about who it was who dealt with things like that. They thought it would be nice to let residents know that it was the PC. So...if you suddenly notice that the roundabout has stopped grinding, a bench has been repaired or a bin replaced please be aware that these are just a few of the functions fulfilled by the PC.

### Old Telephone Exchange on Chelmsford Road

Many residents will have noticed that the frontage of this building (which had been looking extremely shabby) has now been completely refreshed. This followed on from extensive dialogue between the PC / BT with the PC requesting that BT smarten up the building. The PC were delighted with the eventual outcome.

### Public Coffee Morning

The PC are planning to hold a coffee morning one Saturday in the Spring and they would be delighted to meet as many residents as possible. Please drop by to discuss any concerns or simply to say hello, have a cup of coffee and meet members of your local Parish Council. The date once set, will be advertised on the PC notice boards, their website and Facebook Page. Please do keep an eye out for it.



## Felsted Parish Council

### Website

Residents are encouraged to sign up to receive up to date Parish Council news by registering for updates on the PC website [www.felsted-pc.gov.uk](http://www.felsted-pc.gov.uk).

Enter your email address to receive automatic notifications by email of all news articles as they are posted on the website.

### Facebook

The PC now have a Facebook page. Please follow them at [www.facebook.com/felstedpc](https://www.facebook.com/felstedpc) to see up to date local information

**Clare Schorah** Assistant Clerk to the Parish Council

Phone: 07751 565512 Email: [asstclerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk](mailto:asstclerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk)

**Heather Read** Clerk to the Parish Council

Phone: 07719 552174 Email: [clerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk)

## Felsted United Charities

Felsted United Charities is a charitable organisation set up many years ago. The charitable objects of the Trust are for 'the benefit of persons resident in the Parish of Felsted and who are over sixty years of age, OR who are suffering from any illness, disability, disablement or otherwise in special need'.

**Should you wish to apply for support from the charity, application forms will be available at Felsted Post Office from Monday 1 December 2025.**

## Recipe:

### Rhubarb, Rose & Pistachio Crumble

Looking for ideas for what to cook with in-season vegetables and fruit this winter?

Seasonal ingredients include a glittering display of seafood, from mussels to mackerel, as well as fabulous greens, like curly kale and purple sprouting broccoli. Desserts are bright and beautiful, especially with a game-changing February ingredient like tender rhubarb.

#### Ingredients (Serves 4)

10 green cardamom pods  
800g rhubarb, sliced into 2cm pieces  
120g soft light brown sugar  
1 tsp rosewater  
80g unsalted butter, chilled and cubed  
80g plain flour  
40g oats  
2 tbsp sesame seeds  
40g shelled pistachios, roughly chopped  
Custard, ice cream or cream to serve

#### Method:

1. Bash open the cardamom pods and discard the green husks. Use a pestle and mortar to grind the black seeds to a powder, then put them in a small pan with the rhubarb, 40g of the sugar and the rosewater.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes – the rhubarb should be just softening but holding its shape.
3. Transfer to a baking dish.
4. Heat the oven to 160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
5. Rub the butter into the flour until it's a coarse rubble, then stir in the remaining 80g sugar with the oats, sesame seeds, pistachios and a pinch of salt. Sprinkle this topping evenly over the rhubarb.
6. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and crisp on top.
7. Serve with custard, ice cream or pouring cream. Or all three!



# Discover and Support Felsted Nature Area

Felsted Nature Area is a 40-acre green space behind Station Road, owned by the Parish Council for the enjoyment and benefit of our local community.

Managed to promote biodiversity, it is made up of two large, open grassland areas with public access and the 'restricted access' Felsted Fen – a protected Local Wildlife Site and priority habitat, bounded by the River Chelmer and Stebbing Brook. With well-marked paths, a rich biodiversity and easy accessibility, the

Nature Area is a favourite with walkers, dogs and families alike. Parking is available at the Tanton Road car park in Flitch Green (courtesy of Flitch Green Parish Council) and it's a short walk across the bridge.

Pedestrian access is also available from Station Road.

## Current projects

Our Parish Council is committed to improving the Nature Area for the benefit of the flora, fauna and our local community. Guided by Essex Ecology and a team of wildlife experts, we're putting together a thorough management plan. Regular site visits, surveys, hundreds of newly planted trees and bushes plus grants have all helped us transform each habitat—wetland, river, grassland, fen, ancient woodland, and scrub—so it can thrive for both wildlife and people.

Up to now, much of the maintenance has been done by contractors, but we are increasingly managing it ourselves with volunteers, working alongside local experts.

## How to get involved

Ready to make a difference in your community and local environment? There's a role for everyone, whether you're passionate about wildlife, love the outdoors, or simply want to meet new neighbours.

**Volunteer:** Take part in organised 'work party' days—no experience needed! Help with regular maintenance and habitat management.

**Share your vision:** Join our steering group for guided walk-rounds and planning. Contribute your ideas for recreation, education and conservation.



# Discover and Support Felsted Nature Area

**Participate in surveys:** Help us monitor birds, butterflies, wild flowers and more.

**Report:** Simply lend us your eyes and ears. If you visit the Nature Area and notice any maintenance issues or evidence of antisocial behaviour, please let us know by contacting the Parish Clerk at Felsted Parish Council.

**Attend events:** Join our Spring meeting (date to be advised) to discover more about the history, ongoing works and future plans for the Nature Area.

To register your interest in volunteering and to stay updated about meetings and future events please email the Parish Clerk, to join our mailing list.

We look forward to welcoming you—together, we can ensure Felsted Nature Area remains a vibrant community resource for generations to come!

## Contact Information

Felsted Parish Clerk:

Email: [clerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk)

Tel: 07719 552174

## Adult Coaching

Mark Clark

07713 626239

- Monday 9-10am: Cardio Tennis
- Wednesday 9-10am: Cardio Tennis
- Wednesday 7-9pm: Squad Training
- Thursday 9-11am: Ladies Tennis
- Friday 9-10am: Cardio Tennis
- Private Lessons



New for 2026!  
Tennis XPress: 6-week  
new to tennis course  
Weds 10.30-11.30am  
or Friday 7-8pm

## Junior Coaching

Ashleigh Draper

07966 502834

- Group Sessions for ages 4 to 16 on Tuesdays & Fridays 4-7pm
- Performance Group Weds 6-7pm
- Junior League Matches
- Sunday Tournaments
- Holiday Camps



League Teams (Essex Small Clubs, Halstead & District & Essex County)  
Friendly Club Tournaments & Championships  
Socials and Fund Raising Events



## Adult Tennis

Thursdays 5.30pm onwards: Club Mix-In

Sundays 10.30am-1.00pm: Club Mix-In

Friendly Club Tournaments & Championships

Socials and Fund Raising Events

A fun and welcoming club with 3 courts (2 floodlit)

\*Affordable Adult, Junior & Family memberships\*



[stebbingtennisclub.co.uk](http://stebbingtennisclub.co.uk)

Largely through a generous contribution from the parish council and by selling advertising space we have just about been able to deliver our magazine to over 1100 homes in the parish four times a year free of charge. We've asked before for a small contribution but only a handful - a baby-sized handful - make regular donations. So far this year, we've received just £35!

You often tell us how much you enjoy the FOCUS and we have some wonderful volunteers who give their time to write, photograph, layout, proof and even deliver for us but, unless we can generate more income, we may not be able to continue.

So, please help us to continue your magazine and contribute what you can, even just £5 per year per household would help to keep us going. Every penny will be spent on printing and delivery.

Please send your contribution to the Parish Clerk, URC Hall, Stebbing Road, Felsted, CM6 3JD or you can make a direct contribution to the Parish's bank account at the address below.

Barclays Bank

Sort code: 20-97-40 · Acc No: 00393274

Please mark your contribution '**FOCUS**'

Cheques made payable to "Felsted Parish Council"



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## New Car Park/Felsted Primary School

Felsted Parish Council is pleased to advise that a new 90 space car park for the use of Felsted Primary School is nearing completion.

This is being delivered as part of the Sunnybrook housing development following negotiations with the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Group and should alleviate the twice-daily traffic and parking congestion that has historically occurred around the primary school.

Following some legalities that need finalising, on completion the car park will be transferred into the ownership of the Felsted Community Trust. The trust has agreed licence conditions with the primary school, allowing them use of the car park (at no cost) for parking and child drop-off and collection.

With the co-operation of Uttlesford District Council, a financial contribution towards the provision of future maintenance costs was secured from the developer, Troy Homes, as part of the planning approval.

As soon as the legalities and transfer to the Felsted Community Trust is complete, Felsted Primary School will be able to announce the opening of the car park. Access will be via Foxglove Place, the new road leading into the Sunnybrook Development.





We have lots of good news to share! Firstly, we are delighted to announce that we have successfully applied for an inclusion grant from the local authority. We have secured £20,000, which will help us create an outdoor classroom and sensory garden. We are thrilled that our children will now have this designated space, with work set to begin over the February half-term.



Our second piece of wonderful news relates to OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). OPAL is a school improvement programme focused on transforming playtimes by giving children more freedom, choice, and resources (both natural and man-made) for creative, active play. This leads to better social skills, well-being, risk management, and reduced behavioural issues, recognising play as crucial learning time, not just downtime. We have been part of OPAL for a few years and achieved Platinum

status in 2023. Recently, we were audited as part of the reaccreditation process. Not only did we maintain our Platinum status, but our audit score also improved from 85% to 97%.

Please see the feedback from our OPAL assessor:

"What a wonderful achievement. I could not be more proud of the dedicated and sustainable play offer the Working Group, Play Team, and whole school continue to provide and create at Felsted Primary School. The environment you have created is truly child-led, engaging, creative, and filled with happiness.

It was an absolute joy to see your playtimes in action. There was so much amazing play happening at lunchtime. I particularly liked watching the children bug hunting and using the large loose parts. It was wonderful to see so many children having such a lovely lunchtime. It's great to see how the school has developed a variety of areas to provide problem-solving and critical thinking opportunities for all children, as well as places for rest and relaxation.

The ability of your play team and all of your children to comprehensively demonstrate the Benefit-Risk process is impressive and well embedded in daily school life.



You have created a happy, joy-filled environment for the children at your school and should be really proud of your achievement. You are now in the top 1% of primary schools in the country who have achieved an OPAL Platinum award, a huge accolade and testament to the quality of your play provision."

We are feeling very positive following these two great pieces of news and are excited to start working on our school singing concert themed "Be Positive!" We are currently working towards our Arts Mark award, which has given us the opportunity to review and develop the arts in our school. The Drama Club is working on The Snow Queen, which will be presented at the end of term. Additional events include a photography exhibition, and our annual art exhibition.

The children and staff continue to put their all into making the school a fantastic place to be!

Mrs Bryony Collins (Headteacher)



## Start the Year Organised

Kick off January with a few quick checks that can save money and stress:

- ✓ Check your tax code is correct.
- ✓ Ensure you're being paid at least the National Minimum /Living Wage.
- ✓ Note renewal dates for energy, broadband and mobile contracts.
- ✓ Review any benefits or support you may now qualify for.
- ✓ Set a simple budget for the year.

If you're looking for local help or community support services, you can easily find what's available through [essexfrontline.org.uk](http://essexfrontline.org.uk), the county's online platform for quickly finding and accessing local health and wellbeing services.

**Uttlesford Citizens Advice is here if you need free, confidential guidance on money, benefits, housing or work issues**

**To speak to one of our friendly advisers**

**Call: 01799 618840**

**Email: [help@uttlesfordca.org.uk](mailto:help@uttlesfordca.org.uk).**

**[www.uttlesfordca.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordca.org.uk)**

**citizens  
advice**

**Are you new to the Felsted and Dunmow area and want to meet local people? Maybe you are looking for a new hobby. Are you no longer in full-time employment? If so, now is the time to make the most of life in your 'third age'. Dunmow u3a gives you the chance to develop your interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself.**



On Wednesday 29 April, Roger Hance will be taking us on a photographic journey showing us 'The Secret Life of a Wood'. When we walk through a typical broad-leaved woodland, we do not always see the breadth and diversity of the wildlife which live there. This talk shows some of the birds, mammals, insects, wildflowers and fungi that can be found there which, although present, are not always visible until we look more closely.

On Wednesday 27 May, Graham Short will open our eyes to 'My Life as a Micro-Artist'. Graham Short is known for engraving The Lord's Prayer on a speck of gold inside the eye of a needle, and the words, 'Nothing is Impossible' along the sharp edge of a razor blade! He has appeared in many radio and television programmes in Britain and internationally, and has been the subject of a Discovery Channel documentary.



A month later, on Wednesday 24 June, after our short AGM, Roger Browne, acclaimed jazz musician, will entertain and enlighten us with the story behind 'The King's Tiger Rag'. The role that King George V played in bringing Traditional Jazz to Britain in 1919 with The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, how society in Britain was never to be the same again and the unlikely link with Queen Mary's Needlework Guild! Illustrated with live playing, on piano, of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's greatest hits.

All our monthly meetings take place at Foakes Hall, Dunmow CM6 1DG 1.30pm for 2pm start.

To find out more, email:  
[membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk)  
or visit: [www.dunmow.u3asite.uk](http://www.dunmow.u3asite.uk)  
Registered charity number: 1168310

**u3a**  
learn, laugh, live



# CHARITY DANCE

Saturday 25th April 2026

Felsted Memorial Hall

7pm - 11pm

£10 per person

Bring a bottle!

**In aid of Abbeyfield House, Felsted.**

**With Live Music**

(50s - 00s)  
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Tickets from:  
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For more information call:  
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**Abbeyfield**  
Living Society FELSTED

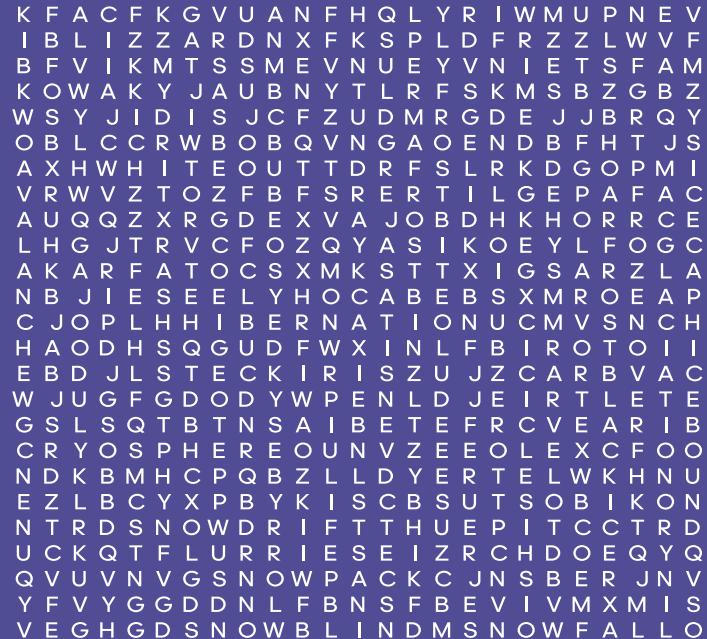
## Puzzle Page

### Giant Sudoku

This is a more extreme example of the standard Sudoku - the 16x16 puzzle is very similar to standard 9x9 grid, but instead of using the numbers 1-9, we also use the letters A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Each row, column, and 4x4 region must contain one and only one of these. You can use all of the same techniques that you would use on a standard 9x9 Sudoku, but it is a bigger puzzle, and will take you longer!

	F		7	A				2	4	8	3	6			
	1			5	9	3	A	6	G			F			
B		D	F	G		C	5		7						
7	G	2	3		4	B		9		1	A	5			
1		B		C	9	3	F	6		5	A				
3	E	9	2		6			G	C	8	B	4			
		7			2	4		3			1				
G	4				1	D	7	2							
5					G		B	3	E		7				
	6	D	E		B		C	F	G	A					
9		G					4	2	1	F	6				
				4	2	6	7	5	D		G				
		B	3	5	1					F	C				
A				C		B	1	3		E					
	5		C	A		9	D	4	2						
8	1		D	F	7	5	C								

### WINTER WORDSEARCH



K F A C F K G V U A N F H Q L Y R I W M U P N E V  
I B L I Z Z A R D N X F K S P L D F R Z Z L W V F  
B F V I K M T S S M E V N U E Y V N I E T S F A M  
K O W A K Y J A U B N Y T L R F S K M S B Z G B Z  
W S Y J I D I S J C F Z U D M R G D E J J B R Q Y  
O B L C C R W B O B Q V N G A O E N D B F H T J S  
A X H W H I T E O U T T D R F S L R K D G O P M I  
V R W V Z T O Z F B F S R E R T I L G E P A F A C  
A U Q Q Z X R G D E X V A J O B D H K H O R R C E  
L H G J T R V C F O Z Q Y A S I K O E Y L F O G C  
A K A R F A T O C S X M K S T T X I G S A R Z L A  
N B J I E S E E L Y H O C A B E B S X M R O E A P  
C J O P L H H I B E R N A T I O N U C M V S N C H  
H A O D H S Q G U D F W X I N L F B I R O T O I I  
E B D J L S T E C K I R I S Z U J Z C A R B V A C  
W J U G F G D O D Y W P E N L D J E I R T L E T E  
G S L S Q T B T N S A I B E T E F R C V E A R I B  
C R Y O S P H E R E O U N V Z E E O L E X C F O O  
N D K B M H C P Q B Z L L D Y E R T E L W K H N U  
E Z L B C Y X P B Y K I S C B S U T S O B I K O N  
N T R D S N O W D R I F T T H U E P I T C T R D  
U C K Q T F L U R R I E S E I Z R C H D O E Q Y Q  
Q V U V N V G S N O W P A C K C J N S B E R J N V  
Y F V Y G G D D N L F B N S F B E V I V M X M I S  
V E G H G D S N O W B L I N D M S N O W F A L L O

HIBERNATION	POLARVORTEX	PERMAFROST
GLACIATION	SLEETSTORM	CRYOSPHERE
WINTERTIDE	SNOWDRIFT	avalanche
FROSTBITE	HAILSTONE	SOLSTICE
SNOWBLIND	FROZENOVER	BLIZZARD
WINDBURN	FLURRIES	WHITEOUT
HOARFROST	SNOWFALL	ICEBOUND
FREEZEUP	SUBZERO	TUNDRA
SNOWPACK	BLACKICE	ICICLE
ICECAP	RIMED	GELID

## DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' CORNER

### A REVOLUTION AHEAD ??!! Local Government Reorganisation

Dear Residents

No, there is no need to take to the barricades but Yes, it is the case that radical change (the first for 50 years) to the way that Local Government in Essex is organised is around the corner. This is not something that either your District nor County Councillors have decided should be imposed upon you but is the result of a policy decision taken by Government. This will affect several "Shire Counties", not just Essex. It will, however, come as some surprise to many residents since this was not anticipated in the Government's Pre-Election 2024 Manifesto.

Under it, Essex County Council will disappear and be replaced by a Greater Essex Mayoral Authority, for which a Mayor will be elected in 2028, when Uttlesford District Council (along with all the other District Councils in the County) will be replaced by a new Unitary Authority. The question as to by which Unitary Authority and how it will be made up is explained below.

What does this mean for us here in Felsted? Well, for the Parish Council, it will be "business as before" since its status and constitution will not be affected.

The Unitary Authority created to replace Uttlesford will provide residents with not only all the services, including social housing, that Uttlesford currently provides but it will also supply residents with schools and education services as well as the adult and young persons' care, currently provided by Essex County Council. The Government's aim is to centralise such services in the hands of Unitaries, rather than have some provided by County and others by District Councils, as at present.

The Government asked Essex County and District Councils to submit their business cases for the creation of Unitaries by the end of September 2025. That was done. It will now be the Government (not the Councils themselves) who will later this Spring decide their number and make up.

What was Uttlesford's preference? I am pleased to say that there was majority agreement reached across the political floor at the Council meeting held last September (24 members in favour, 4 against and 5 abstentions) which was to support, along with nine

## DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' CORNER

other District Councils in the County, the creation of five Unitaries. Essex CC and two other Districts (Epping and Braintree) by contrast favoured the creation of only three.

If the five Unitary model were to be approved, it would mean that the present Districts of Uttlesford, Epping Forest and Harlow would join together to form one Unitary Authority ("West Essex Council") representing some 320,000 people. The business and spatial logic of this structure is derived from the common link provided by the M11 corridor and the significance of Stansted Airport as an economic driver for the three constituent parts. If the three Unitary model promoted by Essex CC were to be favoured by the Government, Uttlesford would instead be joined together with Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils, making up a Unitary in excess of 620,000 residents ("North Essex Council").

I personally consider that for our residents, the North Essex model would provide a greater risk of diminished democratic input. Our voice would be less likely to be heard within such a large Council representing so many people. Also, we have seen Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils previously acting together, about 10 years ago, in what might have appeared to our residents then to be a "predatory" manner in that they promoted the development of 10,000 new houses in what was to be called "West of Braintree Garden Community" (actually mainly at Andrewsfield). Not only would this have directly affected Great Saling and Stebbing for the worst but also Felsted by the resulting change of local character and adverse burden on local infrastructure. A repeated threat of this scenario could better be resisted by combining with Epping Forest and Harlow, the latter of which wants development to come its way.

At a local level, under the five Unitary model, there would be 83 Councillors required, of whom 25 would represent Uttlesford electors. This compares with the total of 43 currently representing Uttlesford. Our ward of Felsted and Stebbing would be reorganised and made up by a new combined ward of Felsted, Stebbing, Flitch Green and Little Dunmow, with two councillors likely to be required, ie one councillor for 3,000 voters. Under the three Unitary model, there would be fewer councillors elected, amounting to about one for 4,800 voters. So, all proposed arrangements would involve a reduced level of democratic accountability in the sense of there being fewer elected councillors than at present but

## DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' CORNER

this would be significantly more the case in the three Unitary model than the five.

If any resident has any questions or issues to raise on this article (or of course any other subject) I will be very pleased to hear from them. A detailed monthly report to Felsted Parish Council is available, authored by me since being elected as your District Councillor in May 2019, through the link appearing under the Minutes of each Parish Council meeting. This contains up to date information as to what is going on in the District policy wise and I encourage readers to spare time to read and I hope enjoy it !

John Evans

District Councillor

**E: [c1revans@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:c1revans@uttlesford.gov.uk)**



# The Hundred Parishes



The Hundred Parishes Society is not a church or religious organisation but we encourage visits to churches because they are often the oldest and most interesting building in any community. Most of our churches are open regularly and welcome visitors.

Our website [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) has many short articles, including some about various aspects of churches including bells, clocks, memorials, poppyheads, spires, towers and windows. We recently added an article about church fonts, some of which appears in the next few paragraphs.

Fonts hold holy water which is used to 'baptise' people, an initiation into the Christian faith. They are often situated near the church entrance. Our local churches have a great variety of fonts, usually made of stone. For example ...

St. George's church in Anstey has an 11th-century font that is rare in that it is decorated with mermen (the male equivalent of mythical mermaids) holding their tails.

Thorley church has a 12th-century font. It was removed from the church and for many years was used as a drinking trough on a nearby farm before being reintroduced into the church in 1855. Its ornate cover was designed by George Gilbert Scott, a prolific architect known mainly for his work designing and renovating churches and cathedrals.

Chickney church has a carved stone font from the 14th century. The bowl is lavishly decorated including shields bearing the coats of arms of local Braybrook and Fitzwalter families.

Debden's 18th-century font is made of Coade stone and is richly decorated with roses and heraldry.

Over the last couple of years, I have been giving a talk entitled "A peek inside some Hundred Parishes churches" to local groups. The talk is a PowerPoint presentation with many photos. If your group might be interested, please contact me on [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com)

Ken McDonald,  
Secretary  
**[www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk)**

# The Hundred Parishes



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<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/digital-content/winter-reading-challenge/childrens-challenge>

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/adult-winter-bingo-challenge-2026>

**Find out more about the Winter Reading Challenge 2026  
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## Free events for February half term!



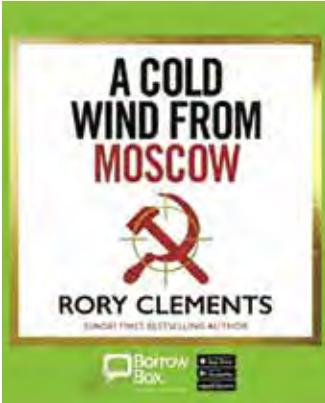
Explore events near you!

From themed crafts and activities to author events, dogs, and the Winter Reading Challenge, there are plenty of ways to keep your little ones entertained over half term at your local library.

Become an Ocean Explorer, interview a police officer, enjoy tales of a mind-reading sausage dog, and much more!

Link: <https://library-events.essex.gov.uk/search>

## Book of the Month - February



The Book of the Month for February is A Cold Wind from Moscow by Rory Clements.

A top-secret nuclear scientist, a South London criminal gangster and a Russian hitman are part of the enthralling eighth instalment in the Tom Wilde spy thriller series.

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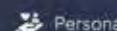


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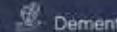
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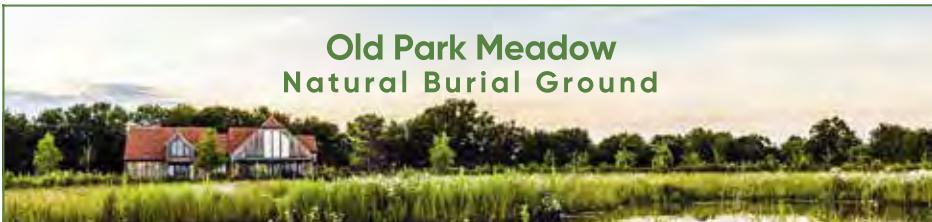
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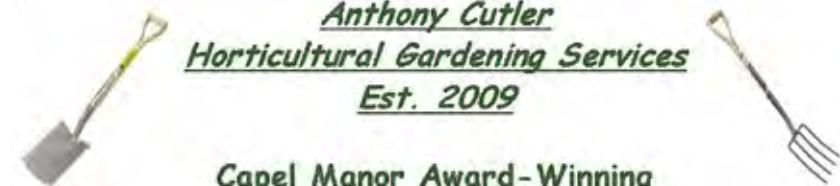
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District Councillors: - Richard silcock  
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John Evans: [cllrevans@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:cllrevans@uttlesford.gov.uk)

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