

# TOFT VILLAGE CALENDAR



APRIL 2025

## Editorial

Social scientists study the notion of ‘moral panic’, defined as an exaggerated response to events whipped up by the media that suddenly dominates public debate but then disappears as everyone moves on to the next story. If you’re old enough, you’ll have lived through many. Rock’n’roll in the 1950s, long hair on men and short skirts on women in the 1960s, computers replacing secretaries in the 1990s, ‘Frankenstein foods’, mobile phones frying our brains, etc. In 1924, an American journalist lamented that the new-fangled radio heralded the death of the art of conversation. Such events were deemed to be signs of the end of civilisation as we know it, the moral decline of the nation, a Big Brother conspiracy or all of the above.

Now it’s artificial intelligence, or AI. You can be sure something has landed with a bump when everyone starts using initials and acronyms. AI causes moral panics ranging from students not writing their own essays anymore to robots taking over and enslaving us. The panics arise from the speed at which AI develops and the fear that machines may become ... well ... cleverer than us (not a huge challenge, you say, given the mess we humans create).

**‘...about one in five people in the US believe that artificial intelligence is already sentient’**

A recent article reported that ‘about one in five people in the US believe that artificial intelligence is already sentient’ (*New Scientist* 27 July 2024). Sentient? Thinking, feeling, knowing, understanding, capable of independent action? Do machines that can perform scientific experiments, diagnose disease, design drainage systems, all faster than humans can, or write a wedding speech, poem, song, translate a text into just about any language at the click of a mouse ‘think’? Are they ‘intelligent’?

**LLMs vomit [...] what we, both sages and fools, put into them.**

The reality is – at least for the present – that all the machine does is sift through the vast treasure-house of humanity’s stored knowledge and information and the equally vast rubbish-dump of inanity, together known as the internet, and works with large language models (ah, let’s just call them LLMs, shall we?) to pull out things someone else said or wrote, with contempt for copyright or intellectual property. The LLMs vomit from their greedy maws what we, both sages and fools, put into them, regurgitating ‘answers found in their vast training data, rather than actually “knowing” anything’ (*New Scientist* 5 October 2024). Cause for moral panic? No, you say.

But not so fast. At least not as fast as AI advances. Will the next generation be mindless mouse-clickers or creative agents? For a sensible opinion, read the article *Human Learning* in this issue. The mindless mousers might well end up enslaved, and ‘artificial general intelligence’ (okay, okay, AGI) as the boffins term it, i.e. human-level intelligence, might win the day.

### DIARY DATES

#### The Parish Council

The Parish Council will meet on Monday 7th April.

#### Toft

#### Friendship Club

[Over 50s Club]

Friendship Club 9th April, 2.30 at Toft People’s Hall.

This is our Annual General Meeting.

#### Easter services

18th April 2.00pm A Service of Meditation, Methodist Church.

20th April 11.00am

Easter Service

(including Holy

Communion),

Methodist Church.

#### Toft Club

19th April Pudding and Games Evening.

26th April Film night *Conclave*.

27th April NEW!

Sunday Funday

11.30am.

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## MINISTRY TEAM

### THE CHURCH IN TOFT

#### St Andrew's Parish Church

**Assistant Curate:**

Revd Barnabas Leeke 07787 800 888

**Lay Minister:**

Barbara Preece Tel: 263466

**Churchwardens:**

Ann Mitchell 262516

John Quenby 263949

#### Methodist Church

**Minister:** Revd Charity Nzegwu

01763 241803

**Stewards:**

Diana Tebbit 263557

Stephen Acklam 264055

Mrs Pat Morton 264010

## SERVICES OF WORSHIP

### 6th April

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

Revd Prof. Michael Reiss

11.00am Holy Communion, Methodist Church

Revd Charity Ngewzu

### 13th April

11.00am Holy Communion St. Andrew's

Revd Prof. Michael Reiss

### 18th April GOOD FRIDAY

2.00pm A Service of Meditation, Methodist Church

Rev Charity Ngewzu

### 20th April

5.30am Service around a fire at the top of Miller's Road

Revd Chris Westgarth

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

Revd Prof. Michael Reiss

11.00am Easter Service (including Holy Communion),

Methodist Church

Revd Barnabas Leeke

### 27th April

11.00am Holy Communion, St. Andrew's

Revd Barnabas Leeke

There will be morning prayer at St. Andrew's every Wednesday at **9.30 am.**

Also on Wednesday evenings at 8.00pm, via Zoom a service of compline: ID: 899 215 191 or follow the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/899215191>

Zoom services available at 11.00am on Sundays

**MEETING ID: 823 1147 3640**

## Thank you...

No doubt, like me, as a child you were taught to say 'Thank you' whenever you were given something. You were perhaps especially reminded to say 'Thank you for having me' when leaving a birthday party, or 'Thank you for my Christmas present.'

The habit of saying 'thank you' plays an important part in cultivating and maintaining relationships throughout life. It can transform society. It shows other people that we value them and do not take them or their services for granted. And being grateful for what we receive, rather than engaging in a pervasive culture of moaning and complaining, is conducive to our own good mental health.

It is good to learn what has been called 'the grammar of gratitude'. This begins with the recognition that life itself, creation in all its beauty, is a miracle and sheer gift. We all experience moments of awe and wonder. The poet Elizabeth Jennings begins one of her poems with the lines, 'I count the moments of my mercies up. I make a list of love and find it full. I do all this before I fall asleep.'

We can all be grateful and thankful people. Worship and prayer take this a stage further and acknowledge God as the source of our many and particular blessings. The Old Testament Psalms teach us to give thanks for God's steadfast love even in circumstances that we find painful and difficult. The New Testament invites us to see God at work in our world in Jesus Christ and to respond with thanksgiving for the healing and saving love we see in his ministry, for the sacrificial death and the powerful resurrection that we celebrate in Passiontide and at Easter. A mind and heart transfigured by thanksgiving can make a positive difference.

Thank you for reading this.

*Robert Dolman*



Hardwick Wood



# CHURCH IN TOFT DIARY



**Joys and challenges - lessons from the early church** During Lent, on Wednesday mornings, 2nd, 9th and 16th April from 10.30 to 12 noon we will meet at 24 Mill Lane for a chance to chat, share ideas and discuss these lessons. All are welcome – you do not need to be a churchgoer in Toft or anywhere else; we would be delighted to see you. Coffee & cake!

**Mothing Sunday 30th March** - The theme is Coming Home. This is a service for young and old – there will be simnel cake and posies. Do come.

## ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

This meeting open to anyone who lives in the village will take place on **Sunday, 23rd April at 12 noon pm at St. Andrew's**. To elect a churchwarden, they must be nominated, and seconded in writing before the meeting takes place (forms available from the Church and Elizabeth Dolman).

The election will be followed by the **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING** at which all members of the Church Electoral Roll are eligible to be present.

This year sees the renewal of the **Electoral Roll**. Everyone must complete a form to be on the Roll. If you wish to remain on the Roll, or would like your name to be added, please contact Elizabeth Dolman 262574.

## TOFT METHODIST CHAPEL

The Toft Methodist Church Council held on 15th January 2025 voted by 9 to 1 to request permission to close the chapel building for worship with effect from summer 2025. This difficult decision has been

made due to the lack of sustainable options to address the practical challenges of maintaining the building. Despite the dedication of a few members who have carried this responsibility for some time, it has become clear that the current arrangement is unsustainable. Methodist procedures are being followed in respect of the cessation of worship in the building. Once these have been completed, and this decision has the necessary approvals, the future of the building itself will be addressed.

**EASTER** Do come and join us. The Chapel has been a place of worship for over 160 years and this will be its last Easter. Let us all celebrate a wonderful Toft Heritage. [We'd love to see you at 5.30am but realise that is quite an effort!]

**THE WARM HUB** has closed for this year. We look forward to returning later in the year.

**Friendship Club 9th April** 2.30 Toft People's Hall. **This is our Annual General Meeting**. We will look at the past year and hear about our plans for the coming year. We are looking for new members of the Committee and we would welcome new Members, so if you are 50 or over, you are most welcome; we look forward to seeing you. The annual subscription is £5 and it's £1 when you attend a meeting as a member (£1.50 for guests).

We are sad to report the deaths of Mrs Ridgeon of Priory Cottage and Mrs Kathleen Sparks, widow of Bernard Sparks, whose parents lived in High Street.



### A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday and Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> May is the annual Toft Spring Feast weekend.

Spring Feast highlights include an exhibition, a village video, Maypole dancing on the village green, the village walk, well-dressing and a tea party.

Full details of days and times will be published in the next issue of the Village Calendar.

### A Date for your Diary - Thursday 8th May 2025



### 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

Toft will be celebrating with several activities culminating with the Lighting of the Beacon in Lot Meadow at 9.30pm.

More details will be given in the next Calendar so keep your eye out.

# TOFT PARISH COUNCIL

## Who is on the Council?

The Parish Council is comprised of a Chair and Deputy chair and five other councillors, all of whom are volunteers. Currently these members are:

	Phone	E-mail
<b>Chair:</b>		
Martin Yeadon	263663	<i>cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>
<b>Deputy:</b>		
Elaine Miles	262255	<i>cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>
Emma Darbyshire	07763 463234	<i>cllr.darbyshire@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>
Rebecca Harris	07796 176333	<i>cllr.harris@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>
Sarah Tebbit		<i>sarahilic01@gmail.com</i>
Christine Watson	07730 941946	<i>cllr.watson@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>
<b>Clerk:</b>		
Ben Stoehr	01954 210241	<i>clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>

The PC met on 3rd March 2025.

Once again, it was good to see four members of the public in attendance. One member explained that following the PC's complaint regarding the poor drainage outside Beldam's Close, the County Council had been to clear the drain. However, given that there were a lot of leaves blowing around the playground opposite, it was likely that these would blow into the drain causing further problems. Further discussion of this drainage problem ensued with another member pointing out that water from this drain should be entering the pond in Pinfold Well Lane but that this had been empty for a few years, which suggested that there is a blockage somewhere between the High Street and the pond, which needs investigating.

It was pointed out by another member of the public that the amount of moss which covered the footpath between the High Street and School Lane by the car park was extremely hazardous. It was pointed out that the grass cutting contract only covered removal of the weeds at the sides and Cllr Yeadon said that he would go and remove the moss along with the leaves around the playground.

A resident from the Birdlings reported that there were residents at this development who would like to see a better footpath along the Comberton Road leading to Toft and Cllr Yeadon pointed out that Highways had been in contact with a proposed plan, yet to be confirmed, of improving the footpath and cycle path between these two residential parts of Toft. Also, regarding EWR's proposed route, Birdlings residents would like clarification regarding what will happen to this pathway and the public pathway from Comberton across the golf course to Church Drift.

Cllr Yeadon was extremely pleased to confirm that he had received an application to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council and the PC unanimously warmly welcomed Giles Harrison as a new member.

It was confirmed that the 20mph request for the village had been re-submitted by Cllr Derbyshire, who also suggested that given so many villages in South Cambs had been converted to 20mph, it was merely a matter of time before Toft was also.

Regarding ownership of TPH, Cllr Tebbit reported back on initial enquiries she had made and, while she is seeking further clarification, it would seem that the PC owns the building on a charitable basis.

Cllr Watson reported back on her discussions with Finding Fitness regarding the climbing frame for the playground. It seems that this is a feasible proposal but before it goes ahead, at least 20 village residents' responses in favour will be required. Cllr Watson is to put some notices around the village, and we would be grateful if you could email her with your approval of this additional piece of free equipment, funded by the National Lottery, which could be used by children of any age and adults too.

We hoped that it would still be possible to get the hedges cut in the playground before birds started nesting but unfortunately that has not been possible, and we must now wait until after the nesting season.

Cllr Harris is to meet with the new contractor responsible for the grass cutting to discuss the details of the contract before the new season.

Cllr Tebbit agreed to represent the PC at future South Cambridgeshire Community Police meetings and Cllr Harrison will become our representative on the Parish Forum.

Cllr Yeadon reported that he had had a letter from a young person in the village expressing interest in starting a junior football team. This was unanimously greeted with enthusiasm. Cllr Yeadon has had a discussion with them and given some guidance on how to take it forward. We look forward to further developments.

The PC agreed to carry out a tree survey of the trees in the playground to ensure their safety.

It was reported that Nuala Tannahill has taken over as Secretary of TPH in place of Graham Gifford.

Following the request for a covered bin opposite St. Andrew's church, it was unanimously agreed that all the bins in the village which are open bins i.e. opposite the church, by the bus shelter, outside the playground and opposite on the High Street would all be replaced with covered bins.

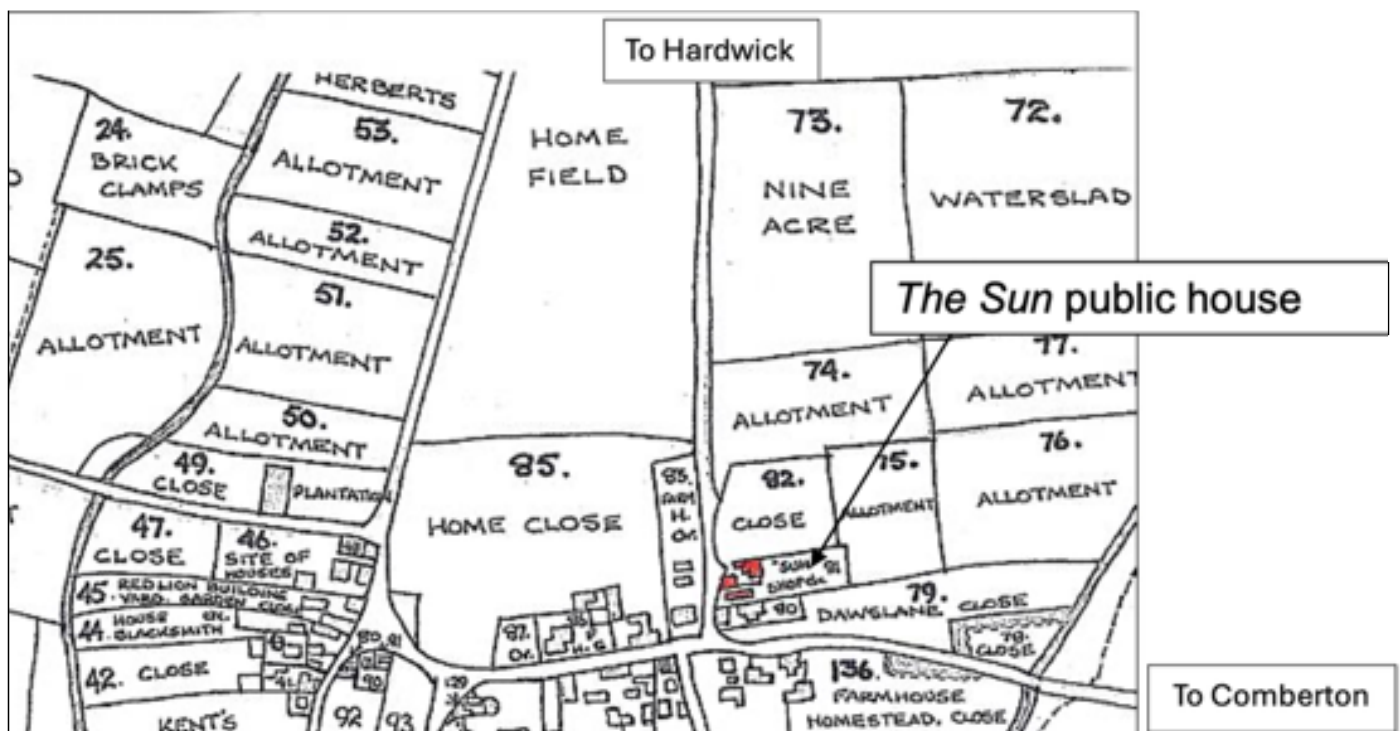
Cllr Yeadon reported that while a few details still have to be confirmed, plans were well underway for VE day on Thursday 8th May. The programme will be published once it has been finalised.

**Date of the next meeting: Monday 7th April 7pm.**

## Public Houses in Toft

Most farmsteads and homesteads during the Middle Ages would have regularly produced 'ale' (originally brewed simply from malt and water) for consumption at each meal, as there were concerns about drinking the local water. The later addition of hops to the production process resulted in beer, which ultimately replaced the early English ale. Beer was initially sold from people's homes, usually served in jugs or dispensed directly from tapped wooden barrels lying on a table. With increasing sales, a room would have been set aside from domestic use and seats provided, so creating the Tap Room. Later, counters would have been installed in a separate room, called the Bar, with standing room only for the drinkers, and so the alehouse or Public House (Pub) came into existence.

Most Toft residents will be aware of the village having two pubs, **The Black Bull** and **The Red Lion**, as both buildings are still with us, although the former became a private residence in 1966 and the latter a Chinese restaurant in 1991. However, documentation reveals the existence of a third public house, **The Sun**, which was located on Hardwick Road near the corner with Daws Lane (now Comberton Road). However, there are no standing remains of this establishment today. During the period when the village had three public houses, the population of Toft was 210 in 1811, increasing to 338 by 1841.



**The Sun** is marked on the Tithe Map of 1845, where it is recorded as a Beer Shop in the Parish register of tithes of 1842 rather than an alehouse, so it may have been smaller than the other establishments. William Williamson was identified as the occupier of the property in the 1842 register. The business was further recorded as **The Sun Public House and Shop** in the Tithe Commissioners' report of 1846 and Williamson was cited as a Beer Retailer in the Kelly's Directory of 1847. A Charles Mean is later noted as a Beer Retailer in Kelly's Directory of 1864, although there is no correlation with a particular property. Around 1869, tighter regulation of the brewing trade led to the closure of smaller alehouses and the Valuation Map of 1910 indicates that the Sun no longer existed by that date.

## Mark Catley



Mark and Julia were in their 30s when they moved to Toft with their daughters Anna and Laura, soon to be joined by baby Jonathan. Mark was a surveyor, working as a Civil Servant for the Valuation Office, and Julia was a teacher. First and foremost, though, they were a family couple, bringing the three children up in a strong Christian home.

Mark and Julia became a big part of Comberton Baptist Church, with Julia involved in music and worship and Mark applying his professional skills to modernising the buildings as well as becoming a Deacon, leading services and generally getting involved wherever there was a need. His sense of humour, his acting and impersonating skills were never far away! They were both very sociable, welcoming people into the church and showing real interest in their lives.

At CBC Mark led two major building developments. The first was the replacement of two portacabins with the fabulous 'Centre', which became the base for children's work, fellowship meals and community activities. The second involved extending the Centre and modernising the Victorian church building. As project manager he not only organised the projects efficiently but also involved the whole church community and ensured that the neighbours were happy with the plans and building works.

Mark was a member of Toft Choir when the village celebrated 777 years of St Andrew's Church. The choir was to give a performance during the celebrations

but Mark persuaded three other members (Cynan Ellis-Evans, Brian Elsdon and Jake Tebbit) to join him in forming a male voice quartet 'for one night only', as he said, to perform on the same bill. Around 17 years later, Toft Barbershop Quartet gave its farewell performance in Toft Methodist Church. Mark continued to perform in Toft Choir until 2022.



Ceilidh at Firs Farm. July 1st 2000.

Mark became Head of the Eastern Region in the Valuation Office and was a good and caring manager of his teams. When he retired, he joined Cheffins as a consultant and was still working for them right up to the end of his life. He was a Trustee and Chair of SIFT – a charity working amongst the poorest people in Nicaragua – and became involved in a wide range of community and charitable activities.

In 2022 Mark and Julia moved to the Malverns to be closer to their children and grandchildren and Mark was enjoying helping Jonathan plan and build a house in Ledbury. Very sadly Mark was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in late 2024 and died in February this year.

Mark was a great friend to many people in Toft, Comberton, church and elsewhere. He will be sadly missed by many in Toft and we send our love at this difficult time to Julia and the rest of the family.



Toft Choir

A Toft contributor takes the theme of this month's editorial further.

## Human Learning

In spare moments, between advising the President and building space rockets, Elon Musk has developed an implant that lets a human brain communicate directly with a computer. Musk's *NeuroLink* promises to revolutionize learning by allowing humans to access and upload digital information directly into their brain, Matrix style. Sounds like science fiction, but no: prototype implant trials have been underway for more than a year. However, if you don't fancy plugging yourself in every night next to your phone charger, what alternative is there to help you brush up on your Spanish before the holidays? I suppose you *could* resort to books, paper, pen and willpower, but where's the fun in that? Everybody, get out your smartphone.

### **Ed-Tech, as it is coined, is learning as much from you as you are learning from it.**

Electronically Assisted Learning is by no means new, but for decades it has involved delivering a curriculum of expertly crafted learning materials. Well-designed courses are popular (I've heard, round-the-way, you can scrape a decent living out of being involved in their creation). A benefit is disconnecting learning from the classroom; students can learn even when there's no teacher on hand. But Artificial Intelligence is changing

the way these technologies work. The smartest contemporary *Ed-Tech*, as it is coined, is learning as much from you as you are learning from it. And the reason for this? By learning about you personally (that is, your mistakes, your ability to recall facts you've seen before, your attention span) the technology can adapt to generate the most suitable learning materials *for you on the fly*. As the marketing department would say, '*your learning journey is optimized*'.

We can do without teachers, then? No. Studies show you can learn from Ed-Tech, but the scope of the learning is still limited. Despite technological advances, the pieces haven't all come together within one very good learning product. Moreover, learning is complex and often tangled up in human nature. Ed-Tech doesn't *understand* humans. It *monitors* humans but is limited in what it's monitoring. Perhaps, when data from your phone's mic and camera become routinely integrated into Ed-Tech, it will begin to learn when you're bored, confused or need a motivating gold star. Until then, Ed-Tech is a great companion for traditional learning, unrivalled for learning on the go and vital when trying to avoid speaking to the person sitting next to you on the train.

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## Toft Club News

We start the month with our regular **Toft Art on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April** – a discussion and practical group relating to all aspects of drawing and painting. Come along and find out what it's about – doors open at 8pm.

On **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April** we have our regular **Food on Friday** – see the website for details on what we are serving but it is sure to be yummy! Doors open at 7pm. This is a very popular evening and we operate on first come, first served – so come early to avoid disappointment!

The music this month starts on **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April** with the popular **Slow Session** - a music evening to join in with! All ability levels are welcome to play or join us to listen - free entry. The bar will be open as normal.

The music continues on **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>** with our monthly **Open Mic Music Night** – an evening of music from our talented local musicians – free entry. If you are interested in performing, please get in touch either via the website or our Facebook page.

On **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>** we are holding another **Pudding and Games Evening** – come along and have a delicious pudding, and then spend the rest of the evening playing games – both board games and some interactive Wii games on the big screen! Or just come along for the games! Puddings just £3 – tickets on sale from the Club. Doors open at 7pm.

By popular demand we are showing the 2024 film **Conclave** on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>** – based on the excellent novel by Robert Harris, it stars Ralph Fiennes as Cardinal

Lawrence who is tasked with leading one of the world's most secretive and ancient events, selecting a new Pope. He finds himself at the centre of a web of conspiracies and intrigue that could shake the very foundation of the Catholic Church. Doors open at 7:30pm and the film starts promptly at 8:00pm. Film Club membership is £12 for the year, or evening membership is £2.50.

Something new to us and for all the family – **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April** will be our first **Sunday Funday!** Starting at 11:30am – we invite you to bring all your family along for three hours of fun, with something for everyone. We will have light lunches available and the bar will be open. There will be a story and rhyme session for little ones (children must be accompanied by an adult at all times) and various games available for older children and the young at heart!

All our regular events are taking place in April, **Toft Quiz on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>**, **Carpet Bowls on Friday 11<sup>th</sup>**, **Table Tennis on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>** and **Toft Bingo on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>**. The Club is always open on Thursday and Friday evening from 8pm, plus most Saturday evenings and there is always a warm welcome where you can meet up with friends and enjoy a drink.

Keep up to date here:

Website: <https://toft.club>

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/ToftSocial>

# Get Creative for Hedgehog Awareness Day on June 15th



I would like to give a huge thanks to the Toft Knit and Natter group, who I went to see last month and who have very kindly promised to knit some hedgehogs for sale on the 15<sup>th</sup> June (Hedgehog Awareness Day) and make some hedgehog-themed banners. Thanks also to Margaret Quenby, who has pledged to make a hedgehog cake for our 'Guess the Weight' competition.

Can't knit or bake? No worries - maybe you can write or paint! If you can remember the first time you saw a hedgehog, or you have a hedgehog who regularly visits your garden, please send me a short written piece and a photo, if you have one. Or maybe you feel you could write a short story or a poem. In addition, if you write a poem inspired by hedgehogs and/or nature, you could send this to Bhanu, who is putting together a pamphlet of Toft poems, so please send to her at [thisbhanu@yahoo.com](mailto:thisbhanu@yahoo.com).

Alternatively, if you are happier with a paint brush than a pen, perhaps you could paint or sketch a picture of a hedgehog? Or maybe you could produce a cartoon - 'Superhog' as Superman or 'Emily Panthog' as Emily Pankhurst? The plan is to have a 'Creative Corner' on the day and exhibit photos, paintings, writings. There is no age limit for this, so if you have children, please encourage them to make a contribution and if you wish to remain anonymous, this is fine.

*Cllr Elaine Miles*

\*Follow the link for knitting patterns - <https://www.theknitcrew.com/6-free-knitted-hedgehog-toy-patterns/>

## Ode to a Hedgehog (apologies to William Blake)

Hedgehog, hedgehog, eyes so bright  
Snuffling in the hedge at night  
Who could ever dream that thee  
Could come to mean so much to me?

Eyes like jet - so small and bright  
A nose which gleams - it seems alight;  
A furry face just like a bear  
And yet a body lacking hair.

Those spines! How they defy  
the urge to stroke!  
And yet I always want to poke  
Each little creature that I meet  
You wander, solitary, on your quest  
For slugs and snails, a leafy home.  
Whilst man, with wall and fence prevents  
Your nourishment and right to roam.

So when the moon casts down its rays  
And lights for you the darkest ways  
Do you feel joy to find a hole  
And find some comfort for your soul?

Hedgehog, hedgehog eyes so bright  
We must find a way to fight  
Against our instincts to enclose  
And leave in fence and wall some holes.

## The Garden Wrangler

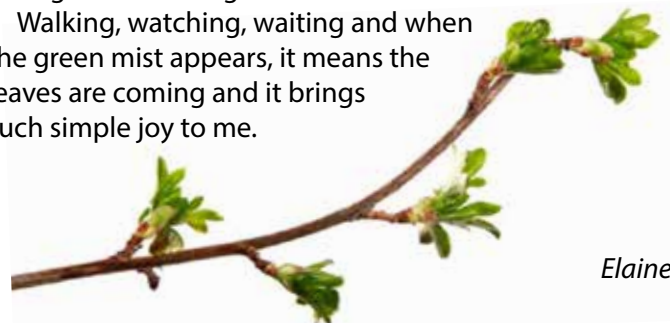


One way to enjoy the garden now spring has sprung is watching the plump pigeons, who provide much amusement with their interactions, hoovering up the food dropped by small birds from the feeders. Also watching bees is very calming and captivating. Growth is moving faster than gardeners can keep up with so try to do something regularly. Keep on top of mowing (apply fertiliser if necessary) and consider not mowing an area until August. If you mulched well earlier in the year with soil conditioner, most garden plants will not require additional fertiliser. Fresh growth of plants is very attractive to the usual garden pests so apply ferric phosphate slug pellets (or other organic control) and keep an eye on sudden aphid outbreaks.

## Nature Diary

At this time of the year, just as spring is beginning to reveal itself, I play my own secret waiting game. Every day, whilst walking with my dog, Maggie, I look upwards at the bare branches of the trees silhouetted against the sky. I'm waiting for what seems to be a green mist emerge from among the branches.

Walking, watching, waiting and when the green mist appears, it means the leaves are coming and it brings such simple joy to me.



*Elaine*



# The power of live music, especially in times of madness!

I was sitting in our Toft garden, lapping up the recent burst of sunny spring weather, reading *The Times*, Saturday March 8, 2025, when a surge of passion arose within me. 'Yes! That is why we do this!' I screamed inwardly.

In the 'Music' section was a review of a book by Jessica Duchon called *Myra Hess: National Treasure*. The newspaper piece outlined how Myra Hess, a pianist, was responsible for bringing daily, live music concerts each lunchtime to the National Gallery, in London, throughout World War II. While the National Gallery had shipped its art collection away for safety, Hess and her fellow musicians entertained the public there and brought art in a different fashion.

On the first day, not knowing how things would work out, Hess gave the concert herself. Hoping for some sort of audience, despite the terrible stress of war and its hazards and with minimal publicity, Hess was astonished to see around 1,000 people queueing on Trafalgar Square, hoping to attend the concert.



*Myra Hess performs at a live lunchtime concert at the National Gallery during World War II*

As Jessica Duchon was to claim, 'Hess ... demonstrated the visceral necessity of music, especially the congregational sharing of a live performance, to sustain the human spirit.' Despite the horrors of the war, people continued to come every day, '... to get the spiritual strength more vital to them than physical rest – the healing power of music.'

We seem to be living in a time of stress and head-scratching craziness, which can exhaust us and leave us wanting to lock the front door and not emerge. Or we can get out of our armchairs and have a fantastic time with real people and listen to live professional musicians at the top of their game. At Toft Social Club we will have had *Sound of the Sirens* on March 22 ... and we have Jacob & Drinkwater in May, Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman in October along with While & Matthews a little later in the month. We are bringing the chance

to hear fabulous live music here on your doorstep - no need to travel, cheap drinks, amazing performances from people who often perform live in front of audiences numbering thousands - and hopefully, there will be no war to dodge! Please take this fabulous opportunity to experience marvellous live music in Toft.

As Hess wrote in her speech on April 10, 1946, at the last concert in the series, (her capitals, not mine), 'IT IS SAID SOMETIMES THAT MUSIC IS A FORM OF ESCAPE, but the experience of these years has made me understand that it is infinitely more IMPORTANT THAN THAT!'

Come and soak up the music, have fun, be wowed; it will be better than listening to the news!



[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library)

Tel: 01223 264277

## Coming Up!

The **Easter Hunt** on **April 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>**.

Children will also have the opportunity to design and decorate their crowns on **Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**, during Shakespeare Week.

Toft author, **Bhanu Kapil**, will offer a poetry workshop on **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April** 11.30am – 12.45pm. Come with something to write on. The event is free and open to all.

## Weekly activities

**Knit, Sew and Natter** group 10.30am – 11.30am.  
April dates: 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Rhymetime** 10.30am – 11.00am (except during the school holidays) for children between 0 to 4 years of age. April dates: 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

**It's Lego Time** with Duplo. Every Saturday from 10.30am. All children must be accompanied by an adult. This is a free event.

## Opening hours (excluding bank holidays, etc.)

Monday	10am – 5pm	(from 31 <sup>st</sup> March)
Tuesday	10am – 1pm	(from 31 <sup>st</sup> March)
Wednesday	10am – 1pm and 2.30pm – 5.30pm	
Friday	2.30pm – 5.30pm	
Saturday	10am – 1pm	

# The Big Toft Breakfast

Local & Fairtrade produce  
**Toft People's Hall**  
**Sunday 18 May**  
**9.00am-12.00 noon**



**Come, eat and enjoy a great big breakfast that does you good...and does good to others**

Organised by the Women of Toft  
 Proceeds divided between Fairtrade and Farm Africa

**Toft Big Breakfast 2025 is coming soon!**

**Sunday, May 18th, 2025 from**

**09:00 to 12:00**

**Please put the date in your diaries.**

**Please step forward to help as we plan this amazing annual Toft event.**

**We are looking for people to volunteer to**

- bake or make breakfast goods/bread or cakes, etc.
- provide Fairtrade goods like oranges or bananas, coffee or tea
- come on the day to set up or serve food/drink or wash up or cook or clear up.

**(from 08.00 – 10.30 or from 10.30 to 13.00)**

**Email: [linda.hollow@btconnect.com](mailto:linda.hollow@btconnect.com) to let us know what you can do/give asap.**

**Enjoy a delicious breakfast.**

**Pay what you can!**

**For all the people of Toft with all profits being given to Farm Africa and Fairtrade.**

## The SCHOOLROOM Community Café

In response to customer demand, we are introducing some exciting new additions to our menu! Each week, the team of volunteers will choose a 'special' to add to our regular choice of homemade cakes, scones, sausage rolls and soups. Bacon baps and filled jacket potatoes are proving very popular, especially when we can offer them at extraordinarily low prices, usually around £2 to £2.50.

We know many people will be sad to see the closing of the Warm Hub now that winter is (hopefully) behind us, but you will soon be able to get your Scrabble or jigsaw fix at the Café, in addition to all the usual refreshments.

Everyone is very welcome to come to the Café. We're open every Wednesday from 10.30am to 1.30pm in the People's Hall. Funtime for Little Ones is from 10.30 to 11am, when babies and toddlers and their carers can enjoy half an hour of singing and rhymes. It's free, no need to book, just turn up.

## Toft Telephone Box Seed swap

April is one of the optimum months for sowing seeds. If you have any leftovers in your packets, please consider donating them to the Seed Swap. Leave them in the opened pack sealed with sticky tape or transfer what you don't need into a paper envelope. Some seeds can still be viable after 2-4 years or longer. See the list below as a rough guide and use up those second hand seeds in our Telephone Seed Swap

Veg	Years	Flowers	Years
Beans .....	3 - 5	Amaranth .....	4
Beetroot		Aster .....	1
& chard .....	2 - 3	Calendula .....	5
Brassicas .....	3 - 6	Cosmos.....	3
Carrots .....	3	Dianthus .....	4
Courgettes		Foxglove .....	2
& squashes .....	2 - 4	Hollyhock .....	3
Cucumbers		Nasturtium....	5
& melons.....	10	Nicotiana .....	3
Lettuces.....	2 - 5	Phlox .....	1
Parsley .....	2 - 3	Poppy.....	4
Parsnips.....	2	Snapdragon..	3
Peas .....	3 - 5	Sweet Pea .....	3
Tomatoes.....	8	Zinnia.....	5

You can test old seed by sowing a few onto damp kitchen paper. Put in a plastic bag somewhere warm and check after a few days. If your test seeds germinate, go ahead and sow the rest.



## Wildlife Trust for **Beds, Cambs & Northants**

### **Cambourne Nature Reserve Family Events Spring 2025**

Wednesday 9th April 10-12ish Family wild play

Wednesday 16th April 10-12ish Outdoor art

**General enquiries** [cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org)



Arthur Rank Hospice Charity

Arthur Rank Hospice Charity are excited to announce their first Spring Wreath-Making Workshop at the Hospice in Shelford Bottom led by Eco-Florist Flora Laura Flowers. Just in time for Easter, book your place for Friday 4 or Saturday 5 April by visiting [arhc.org.uk/whatson](http://arhc.org.uk/whatson) or call 01223 675888.



### **Spring Wreath Making Workshop**

Friday 4 April 6.30-8.30pm or  
Saturday 5 April 10.30am-12.30pm

C A M B R I D G E

## PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Protecting Local Heritage & Nature

Cambridge Past, Present & Future: the charity that protects the beauty of Cambridge, its heritage and green spaces.

### **Bourn Windmill Open Days 2025**

A rare opportunity to see inside one of the oldest windmills in the UK and have a go at pushing the windmill round on its post.

Sat 10 May 2pm - 4.30pm

Sun 11 May 11am - 1.00pm and 2 - 4.30pm

Contact Kate on [cfm.armstrong@gmail.com](mailto:cfm.armstrong@gmail.com) or 07926 359098

Last Tours: 4pm. Refreshments: Teas and cakes available.

Location: Caxton Road CB23 2SU, between Caxton & Bourn villages.

Entry: Adults: £4, Children: £1, Members: FREE



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

*Working together to improve community safety*

### **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Bulletin**

Don't let a garden spring clean lead to fire.

Staying safe outside is just as important as keeping your family safe from fire in your home.

As the springtime weather (hopefully) begins to arrive, many will take the opportunity to get out in the garden and give it a tidy.

There are a few simple things to do which will help reduce the risk of having a fire:

- Dispose of garden waste using either a local waste pick up service, or take it to a local recycling centre. Do not light a bonfire!
- Ensure cigarettes are completely out.
- Do not leave glass bottles lying on the ground – the sun's rays reflect through the glass and can start a fire.

### **If you are planning to have a BBQ:**

- Use barbeques on a hard, flat surface away from grass, shrubs or fencing.
- Put disposable barbeques on bricks. Do not place directly on grass.

