

# TOFT VILLAGE CALENDAR

February 2025



## EDITORIAL

As a rule, people acknowledge one another in the streets of Toft. This may take the form of a beatific smile lasting no longer than a microsecond, a wave, a hello or a full-blown conversation. But is the 'rule' in 'as a rule', the same as the rules of the road, or the Meridian Golf Club rules? Rules and laws get their full force when they are debated, agreed, codified, enacted and enforced by competent authorities. These can range from 'thou shalt not kill' to 'thou shalt stop at a red light'. Yet some rules which have never been officially codified are followed instinctively by most of us - as a rule. These include basic table manners; to go over to a stranger's table in a restaurant and help yourself to some of their delicious-looking food is, well, just not the done thing.

Unwritten rules operate in Toft. Many houses have front doors and side/back doors but using any but the front door when paying a visit can only be done by invitation or by mutual understanding between family or friends. In the village streets and lanes, among Toft people, it's the usual thing to say hello or exchange the time of day, even to strangers. This sometimes disconcerts outsiders, especially urban escapees enjoying our lovely environment. In the full bustle of the urban setting, even making eye contact with a passer-by could brand you as a weirdo. In Toft, if you know someone more than by sight, you often exchange news items, whether it be about a fallen tree or the state of someone's health.

Then there are the footpaths which criss-cross the fields beyond the village streets. Here the obligation to acknowledge one's fellow humans becomes stronger. Definitely a hello, perhaps even a throwaway remark about the weather, even the urbanites usually manage that, and if it's someone you know from the village, stop for a least a minute or two.

Away from the quiet paths around Toft, in places like Wimpole, once the number of people walking on the path reaches a critical mass, the hellos evaporate, only to return when the busier sections of paths thin out to just the hardened walkers. Some sociologist has probably done a study of the density of people per 100 metres that determines whether eye contact, a head nod, a hello, an exchange of small talk or a full-blown conversation is the golden rule.

And out on the wild mountains, who, walking alone, would completely ignore another solo walker coming at you and passing you on the same narrow path? Weird indeed. Rules never written down, but followed by all but the snob, the curmudgeon, the person of evil intent, the genuinely troubled, profoundly shy or fearful individual. Golden rules indeed.

## DIARY DATES

### Toft Friendship Club

[Over 50s Club]

12th February, 2.30  
Toft People's Hall.  
Our Speaker will be  
Barbara Preece  
'Grandparents,  
Holding Hands with  
our Past'

### The Parish Council

The Parish Council  
will meet on Monday  
3rd February.

### Simple Sewing Knit and Natter

There will be a  
meeting in the  
Café at the Hall on  
Wednesday 26th  
February at 11am.  
For information  
contact Lucy (262948)  
or Sally (262895).

### Events Calendar

See back page.

## EAST WEST RAIL

### New Petition

The May 2024 petition urging a review of East West Rail's plans was terminated by the general election. It is now live again. The new petition has essentially the same wording – see below.

The deadline for signing is 11 June 2025.

"We do not want the Bedford to Cambridge section of the Oxford to Cambridge Rail Link as described by East West Rail Co's Route Update Announcement and subsequent refinements including in the 2024 Non Statutory Consultation. We call for plans to be paused for a full transparent and independent review."

If you do not want the East West Railway running close to Toft, please sign the petition.

The link to sign the petition is:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/701546>



QR code for the EWR petition

**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**

### **2nd February**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
Revd Prof. Michael Reiss  
11.00 am Holy Communion, Methodist Church  
Revd Charity Ngewu

### **9th February**

11.00 am Holy Communion, St. Andrew's  
Revd Barnabas Leeke

### **16th February**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)  
Revd Prof. Michael Reiss  
11.00am Morning Worship, Methodist Church  
Revd Robert Dolman

### **23rd February**

11.00 am Holy Communion, St. Andrew's  
Revd Priscilla Slusar

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

## *A Time for Everything*

**There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.**

***Ecclesiastes 3.1***

This simple truism begins perhaps one of the most famous passages of the Bible (thanks in no small part to Pete Seeger's musical setting and The Byrds hit single performance). I've never been very good at sticking to it, however, so I recently found myself planting spring flowering bulbs at a very unseasonable time of year... As I write this, the snowdrops are already up and the first shoots of daffodils are visible in many places; what has rested quietly underground through the changing seasons is now coming into a season of its own. I've always appreciated those first signs of spring in some of the coldest and dreariest months of the year. Each one is a little reminder that the thaw will come, the days will lengthen and the world will return to life and light.

The writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to list all sorts of things which have their season, both good and bad, but alongside the tone of pessimistic inevitability is a strand of hopeful rejoicing in the good things that the world and its inhabitants display. A central feature of the Christian faith is that Jesus' life and ministry is evidence that there is more to life than we can know or understand, that God is at work even in cold, dark places which appear at first to be devoid of life.

Whatever season you are experiencing at the moment, whether it is the 'winter' of loss and loneliness or the 'spring' of new life and opportunity, you are not alone. The ministry of the church is to accompany people at times of both weeping and rejoicing. I've found that The Church in Toft has many kind people with expertise in both.

*Revd Barnabas Leeke*





# CHURCH IN TOFT DIARY



## Friendship Club

Friendship Club 12th February, 2.30 Toft People's Hall. Our speaker will be Barbara Preece 'Grandparents, Holding Hands with our Past'. As usual, everyone is welcome. If you plan to come, you might like to bring a picture of a grandparent

The Friendship Club is for over 50s. We meet every month on the 2nd Wednesday at 2.30pm at Toft People's Hall. We have a varied programme of talks, both illustrated and non and try to go on at least one outing every year, plus a Christmas lunch and other celebrations. To be a member costs £5, payable at our April AGM, plus £1 per meeting. There is always a raffle.

Visitors are always welcome and it costs them £1.50 a time.

Do come - we would welcome you.

## The Warm Hub

Every Monday from 10.00-12.00 at the Methodist Chapel in High Street.

Everyone is welcome at any time. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served.

Come and join us for chat, games, friendship and refreshment. The scrabble board awaits!



We would love to see you there and you'll be sure of a warm welcome.

Bring a friend.

## NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES

### WHAT'S ON IN LONGSTOWE?

LONGSTOWE HISTORY SOCIETY has five talks a year held at Longstowe Village Hall, £3 per talk, or membership for £10 a year. There are (free!) refreshments at 7.30pm and the talks begin at 8.00pm. Everyone welcome.

#### Coming up

Tuesday, 25th February 2025: 'King James 1st's Royston Palace'. Illustrated talk by Sophie Riches (Curator, Royston Museum).



King James I's royal palace at Royston was once described as 'one of the most unlikely and unusual royal residences in the history of the monarchy'. Discover more about the palace buildings and the significant events that happened in Royston during James' reign.

Tuesday, 29th April 2025: 'History of the American Cemetery', followed by a guided tour of the Cemetery on Monday 12th May.

ALSO Friday, 28 February, 2.00-4.00pm: LONGSTOWE VILLAGE HALL AFTERNOON TEA. Everyone welcome.

## LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST BUS ROAD PLANS

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is a local civic charity that protects the beauty of Cambridge and its environment. Its 2,000 members support the charity in its work to care for local countryside and heritage and it campaigns to influence the future of greater Cambridge.

The charity owns and cares for Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

It is currently spearheading a coalition to initiate legal proceedings to halt the Greater Cambridge Partnership's proposed Cambourne to Cambridge bus road, which will involve the construction of 2.5 miles of road across the countryside, including through Coton Orchard and Madingley Hill.

More information about the charity and its latest campaign can be found at

[www.cambridgeppf.org](http://www.cambridgeppf.org)

<https://www.cambridgeppf.org/cambourne-cambridge-busway>





## Christopher Keith Collett - 1938-2024 Countryman



Keith was born in Caldecote to Chris and Violet Collett. The family later moved to Providence Cottage, Brookside, Toft and then to School Lane. Keith was one of seven children and older brother to Koran, Margaret, Paul, Marilyn, Lyn and Michael. Many members of the Collett family lived in Toft and Keith would remain here for the next eight decades.

Aged 15, he went to work for local farmer, Ken Tebbit, at Orchard Farm. Working here, he developed a lifelong love of the land, agriculture and the heavy horses he worked with. This passion was one that continued throughout his life and he spent much of his spare time at agricultural county shows, auctions and sales and ploughing matches or just enjoying the many walks around Toft and the surrounding countryside.

He married and became a father to three daughters: Joanne, Lucy and Helen. By this time, he had moved into 29 High Street. He established a large vegetable garden here and also had an allotment. He loved working in the garden and was still sowing seeds and planting a number of vegetable crops in the spring and summer of 2024.

In 1962, aged 24, he went to work as a lorry driver for Rugby Cement at Barrington. He enjoyed a long and happy employment and described this as the best job he ever had, but continuing his love for the countryside, in his spare time, went with his father to 'help out' cutting hedges and digging ditches for Mr Tom Quenby at Wood Barn Farm, Toft. Here he could also indulge in his hobby of shooting. After a while, he was promoted to the enviable position of driving the Caterpillar crawler and this became another of his passions and most likely sparked another lifelong interest in vintage tractors. When he took compulsory redundancy from Rugby Cement in 1988, he continued to work on the farm for Mr John Quenby, who had taken over from his late father. In 2001, the farmland was contracted to Mike Tebbit and Keith transferred employment and was able to stay in the job he loved. One of his favourite tasks was hedge cutting and apparently his skill in this field was highly regarded in the farming fraternity - something of which he was hugely proud. He 'retired' aged 65 but like many people who love their work, he inevitably stayed on and so continued working for Mike

until his health began to fail in the summer of 2024 at the age of 86.

Keith met Joan in June 1988 and they attended couples and ballroom dances in Orwell before going on to join Line Dancing classes. Over the next 36 years, they enjoyed holidays, going to country music concerts, dances, days out and attending family occasions and get togethers.

Keith had many interests and whilst many of these revolved around his love of the countryside, he also loved cars, football and country and western films and enjoyed an extensive range of music. He was a man of great humour, he loved people and made many friends. In his last few years, he became a regular face at the Warm Hub and Community Café.



Keith would not have considered himself successful. However, as one of Toft's longest residents, to have lived his whole life amongst family and friends in the little-changed village that he loved, having two vocations shaping his life, from which he could recount so many happy tales and anecdotes, would be considered by most, just that.

A celebration of Keith's life will be held on **Saturday 8th February, 2 – 5pm in Toft People's Hall**. All are welcome.

## TOFT PARISH COUNCIL

### Phone

### E-mail

#### Councillors

Chairman:

Martin

Yeadon 263663 [cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk](mailto:cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk)

Emma

Darbyshire 07763 463234 [cllr.darbyshire@tpc.toft.org.uk](mailto:cllr.darbyshire@tpc.toft.org.uk)

Rebecca

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Elaine

Miles 262255 [cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk](mailto:cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk)

Sarah

Tebbit [sarahilic01@gmail.com](mailto:sarahilic01@gmail.com)

Christine

Watson 07730 941946 [cllr.watson@tpc.toft.org.uk](mailto:cllr.watson@tpc.toft.org.uk)

#### Clerk

Ben Stoehr 01954 210241 [clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk](mailto:clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk)

30 West Drive, Highfields, Caldecote Cambridge CB23 7 NY

The Parish Council met on Monday 6th Jan 2025.

All Councillors were in attendance.

#### GRASS CUTTING

Four quotations have been received for the Grass Cutting Contract for the village. There was a nervousness about the cheapest quotation regarding some of the costs and it was agreed that the figures should be confirmed before progressing. References for the cheapest company are also to be sought before final agreement about where to place the contract.

#### SPEED LIMIT

It was agreed that the application to reduce the speed limit between Toft and Comberton would be delayed in order to organise a survey of residents to show support for the proposals and also to ensure that there is support from Comberton. A reapplication of the request for a 20mph limit throughout the village would be progressed (although it's recognised that it's unlikely to be successful due to the number of different PCs also requesting a similar reduction.)

The Birdlings Residents Management Committee have been approached to encourage them to provide a general notice board for the Birdlings estate. They are not averse to it and will consider it when they next meet.

#### EAST WEST RAILWAY

The PC discussed the response to the EWR consultation and generally agreed the areas of concern. These are to be captured in a formal response and circulated prior to responding before the closure of the consultation period.

#### BIRD BOXES

Working with the Comberton Men's Shed group, the manufacture and installation of several bird boxes around the village is continuing. It was recognised that, ideally, these would be installed by the end of January and it was agreed that the group would be encouraged to complete the project by then.

#### SPEED MONITORS

It was agreed to purchase two solar power units for the village speed monitors.

#### WATER AND FLOODING

The PC had contacted the Environmental Agency regarding trees and debris in the Bourn Brook and the effect of it on potential flooding. The EA did respond but gave no commitment to clear the stream. A number of residents had raised the problem of flooding by the golf club entrance. The PC has previously raised the concern with the County Council and there are several references to it on the CC Highways reporting page. However, due to the seriousness of the issue, it was agreed that a direct request to the Highways Contact would be made.

#### VILLAGE WELCOME PACK

The village Welcome Pack has been updated and it was agreed to include it on the Council's web page in addition to printing several copies to hand to new residents. Please see the formal minutes of the meeting for the definitive outcomes from the meeting.

The Parish Council will meet next on Monday 3rd February

## TOFT 2025

Dear Residents

Back in 2020, we compiled a website named Toft 2020. The idea was to collect lots of information about our village, its activities and the people who lived here. You can view the results at <https://2020.toft.org.uk>. It was always the plan to repeat the exercise every five years and guess what: those five years have passed and the time has already come around. So, we are now doing the same exercise for this year, only this time we want to make it bigger and more diverse. We're hoping to collect details and pictures of everything from Toft Social Club to butterflies seen in Toft, from the Parish Council to the dogs of Toft, as well as one-off events. Martin Sebborn has brilliantly compiled a new website to collect this year's information.

If you have a particular area of interest that you could contribute, or if you would just like to be involved, please let me know at [martin.yeadon@gmail.com](mailto:martin.yeadon@gmail.com).

Thank you.



The second meeting of the now defunct Internet Club - taken from the 2020 archive of January 2020. <https://2020.toft.org.uk>



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*Working together to improve community safety*

## Take Charge and Be Safe

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has seen an increase in fires involving lithium-ion batteries over the last few years. Lithium-ion batteries are found in mobile phones, laptops and games console controllers, cordless tools, garden machinery, e-bikes and e-scooters. These batteries can heat up and cause a fire if not used correctly.

### You can Take Charge and Be Safe by following a few simple tips:

- Charge batteries when you are awake and alert
- Only use the battery, charger and cables supplied by the manufacturer
- Before you go to bed, check anything still charging is switched off
- Do not overload sockets
- Do not charge e-bikes and e-scooters in escape routes. Batteries can be a fire hazard if they are not disposed

of properly. This includes vapes or other e-cigarettes as well as standard batteries. They should never be put in household rubbish or recycling bins.

### How to dispose of batteries

To find your nearest battery collection bin, visit <https://www.recyclenow.com> or <https://www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk>.

As well as local recycling centres, many shops have collection bins in-store.

(In South Cambs put small portable household batteries (e.g. AA, C, D, button) in a small, tied plastic bag and place on top of your blue, green or black bin lid for kerbside collection.)

Help keep your home and family fire safe – complete our online home safety check

You can carry out your own home fire safety check online by visiting the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service website. <https://bit.ly/Home-Safety-Check>

For more information log on to [www.cambsfire.gov.uk](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk), follow us on social media or call 01480 444500.



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

The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants' runs nature-themed events across the year in Cambourne, Trumpington Meadows Nature Reserve and Paxton Pits near St Neots. Here is what is planned for Cambourne in 2025 (note that members of the Wildlife Trust BCN enjoy a discount, and there are sometimes early-bird tickets available):

**Little Bugs:** relaxed, wildlife wanders for families with toddlers, most Friday mornings after the Easter holidays until the end of October.

**Wild in the Wood:** sessions for families with primary-aged children on Wednesdays during school holidays. On 19<sup>th</sup> February we'll be dissecting owl pellets to look at the bones of the small mammals they have eaten whole!

**Youth Rangers:** monthly sessions for secondary-school-age young people interested in local wildlife and global environmental issues.

**Walks for adults:** themed walks aimed at adults in May (not-quite-dawn-chorus), June and July (summer

wildlife), and July and August (night walks).

**Sit and Chat in Nature:** exactly what the title says! We'll find a nice spot near Oaks Wood car park and enjoy the wildlife over a cuppa.

**Nature and Natter:** a new series of monthly activities with a naturey theme and a focus on friendly chat in Cambourne or Trumpington Meadows, either on a Wednesday evening or Saturday morning. Our February session is willow weaving at our head-office in Cambourne on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 6.30-8.30pm.

Find out more on our website: [www.wildlifebcn.org](http://www.wildlifebcn.org); [www.wildlifebcn.org/events](http://www.wildlifebcn.org/events); [www.wildlifebcn.org/get-involved](http://www.wildlifebcn.org/get-involved)

### Local enquiries

[Rebecca.Neal@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:Rebecca.Neal@wildlifebcn.org)

Facebook: @BeccaBadgerWTBCN

### General enquiries

[cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org)

@wildlifebcn

[www.wildlifebcn.org](http://www.wildlifebcn.org)



Robert Longhurst (School Lane) sent us this thought-provoking article about how we are all linked to the past through relationships and chance encounters.

## PROXIMITY

For years I have been fascinated by our proximity to historical events which seem cloaked in the mists of time. For instance, Wyatt Earp, the famous sheriff and gun fighter who took part in the gunfight at the OK Corral and who died in 1929; that is only 11 years before I was born and yet he comes from an era long gone.

Perhaps a better illustration is the women who have been drawing an American war widows' pension from the American Civil War, 1861-1865. I believe the last widow died in December 2021. This happened a number of times when a young soldier or drummer boy survived the war, lived to his 80s and married a very young wife, who is able to claim until her death. Given that the Civil War ended in 1865, you see what I mean.

On a more personal note, I recently visited the Blue Lion in Hardwick, which caused me to remember that in about 1977, I went there with a gentleman who was born in 1876, the year of Custer's last stand at the battle of the Little Big Horn, the same year as Otis was testing a lift in New York.



That gentleman was my maternal grandfather (*left*). I was born in 1940 and he died in 1979 aged 103, when I was 39. I knew him very well. Here was someone born before electricity, motor cars, aircraft and, believe it or not, the bicycle as we know it, which had to

wait for a decent surface on the lanes and roads and yet he used buses, listened to the radio and used electrical appliances as though they had always been there.

He told me a story of a voyage he made to Archangel in northern Russia, on a merchant ship. He said they would take soap to give the women who helped unload the cargo so they got to the pub quicker. He then said that over the bar was a picture of the King. He was of course referring to the Tzar. This was before the Russian Revolution! I find the close connection to historical events intriguing.

Again, on a personal note, we were in Oamaru, South Island, New Zealand, in a museum featuring the plate photographs taken by Ponting on Captain Scott's final Antarctic expedition. We spoke to the curator, who told us that following Scott's death, the Terra Nova called in at Oamaru but they were not allowed to disclose the dramatic news until the newspaper which sponsored the expedition had been told. As a result, they anchored offshore so the boat would not be recognised and some men rowed ashore to obtain supplies. They were not allowed to land until they had been checked by a doctor. The curator told us that he was the son of that doctor! If that is not amazing, then how about this? My office in Cambridge enabled me to park in West Road and walk through King's College. This was probably in 1975. For about two weeks during the summer, I would meet Sir Peter Scott, the famous ornithologist, the son of Captain Scott of the Antarctic, walking the other way. We would pass the time of day and on to our business. You see what I mean?

RL



Arthur Rank Hospice Charity

*making every moment count*

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT WITH GRIEF KIND

Bereaved Cambridge residents can access free, informal support, as Arthur Rank Hospice Charity hosts a new Grief Kind Space, in association with Sue Ryder, held at The Bistro, in Shelford Bottom, Cambridge, every Friday from 10am until 12 noon.

By collaborating – with the Hospice hosting the space and Sue Ryder providing trained Grief Kind Space Volunteers – the two charities hope to tackle the isolation and loneliness felt by many people following a bereavement.

Annalie Graham, Bereavement Lead at ARHC said:

"Almost every home in the UK has experienced or will experience the loss of someone. Research from Sue Ryder, found that 86% of people who had been bereaved said they felt alone in their grief.

"By working together, we hope we can fulfil this unmet need by offering a safe, welcoming and

supportive place for anyone to share their experiences of grief, helping them to feel heard and less alone."

"Attendees have told us how coming to the space each week makes the week ahead easier to face. Many have also shared how family and friends just don't always understand what they are feeling, but the people they meet at the Grief Kind Space do and it's of enormous help to them."

The Grief Kind Space is open to anyone over 18 who has experienced a bereavement. There is no need to register or book.

"Whether you want to attend regularly for the full two hours, or pop in to connect with others in a similar situation for a quick chat when you need to, you will receive a warm welcome from our team of Sue Ryder trained volunteers, who are there to support anyone who has experienced any kind of loss at any time."

For further details visit [arhc.org.uk/griefsupport](http://arhc.org.uk/griefsupport)

# Toft Club

We will be holding our monthly Food on Friday on 7th February – we are looking at doing something to celebrate Chinese New Year – please see the website for details nearer the time.

We are planning a Casino Night in February – on Saturday 22nd. Come along and enjoy the tables – all games played with tokens, and a prize for the most successful person on the night. There will be a Fish & Chip supper available – tickets for this will need to be purchased in advance at the Club. Tickets on sale shortly.

The film in February will be the 2023 film "The Critic" starring Ian McKellan as a powerful London theatre critic who lures a struggling actress into a blackmail scheme with deadly consequences. A suspenseful thriller co-starring Gemma Arterton, Mark Strong and Lesley Manville. Doors open at 7:30 and the film starts promptly at 8pm. Evening tickets are £2.50 and annual membership is just £12.

All our regular events are taking place in February, Toft Art is on Thursday 6th, the popular Open Mic / Music Night is on Saturday 8th, Toft Quiz on Thursday 13th, Carpet Bowls on Friday 14th, Table Tennis on Thursday 20th and Toft Bingo on Thursday 27th.

The Club is always open every Thursday and Friday evening from 8pm, plus many 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://toftsocialclub.org.uk>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ToftSocial>



Nothing ever stops in the garden and in February the first signs of new growth are showing, so this is the last opportunity to cut hedges and do major pruning before bird nesting season starts.

Keeping off our heavy wet soil prevents compaction and damage, so mulch beds on frosty days to prevent this.

Planning and looking to the future is one of the joys of gardening and this can be done inside after a satisfying day making the most of the daylight.

## Local nature plan for Toft

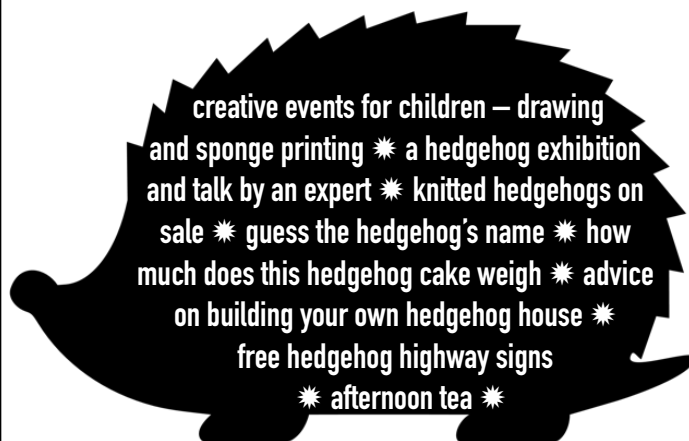
*"We can't save the planet but we can save a hedgehog."*

As you are aware from previous posts, several people are monitoring the natural world in and around Toft. From the responses to the Wildlife Survey everyone sent in last year - which indicated little evidence of the presence of hedgehogs - along with the increasing number of reports in the press about the fall in hedgehog numbers, I decided that this could be an area of wildlife that, as a village, we could do something about.

I recently met with a member of staff from the Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital, who was extremely encouraging about the wildlife plan in place in Toft and informed me that this coincided with initiatives that they were planning.

One of these initiatives will involve releasing tagged hedgehogs into appropriate areas and wouldn't it be great if one of these areas could be Toft? So, I thought the best place to begin was with a typical Toft event - so save this date in your diary!

**Hedgehog Awareness Day – 15th June 2025**  
**(Supported by Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital)**  
**A family fun day to celebrate hedgehogs – and - it's Father's Day**



Look out for more information in future editions of the Village Calendar.

*Cllr Elaine Miles*



## Cycling and the Cycle Shop

Records show that bicycles were in common use in Toft from the 1920s to the 1960s and, at one time, children who lived more than two miles from school were provided with a bicycle for free. Local children would certainly have enjoyed their bicycles. The late Terry Osborne describes 'the boys racing around the local lanes' in the 1950s.

Various villagers who worked away from Toft, including those employed at Chivers orchards might have cycled to work. The local postmen would have made deliveries by bike, as did the butcher from Comberton. Geoff Balcombe and Paul Collett also spoke of using bicycles for Toft Shop deliveries during the '50s and '60s.

With increasing mechanisation reducing the local need for agricultural workers, more villagers began working away from Toft. This and greater access to motor vehicles from the 1960s onwards brought a move away from bicycles for getting to work. However, in more recent times, there has been a very significant resurgence in cycling due to greater awareness of the health benefits and environmental concerns.

Cambridge is universally recognised as a 'cycle city' with a number of long-established cycle shops. However, several villages in and around the Bourn Valley, including Toft, also had their own cycle shops in the past. From the mid-1930s to the late 1950s, when he retired, Edward 'Jack' Jakins sold and repaired cycles from a converted barn beside his thatched cottage home on High St.

The front of the barn was the cycle shop and the rear was a large, well-equipped workshop. Jack sold

various well-known cycle brands, including the famous 'Raleigh', but much of his business involved repairing bikes (as well as lawnmowers and possibly motorbikes) in his workshop. At the time, a bicycle was not a cheap purchase for many and several older villagers recall hiring their bikes instead for a weekly rate of 10 shillings (50p). Jack retired in the late '50s, but Jake Tebbit speaks of him still doing repairs as a favour for villagers into the late 1960s.

Later, Tony Pym Hember, an ex-racing cyclist, set up a large workshop at his home in Beldam's Close, where he repaired bicycles. Ann Mitchell recalls Tony repairing her children's bikes in the late '70s and early '80s.



Toft Villagers watch as firemen tackle the blaze



Regrettably, in May 1973, when Jack was 81, a fire in his workshop destroyed not only the old barn but also his thatched cottage home. The site is now the location of the two 'Potton' houses in the High Street.



# Don't be Afraid of Virginia Woolf!



The chances are you recognise this picture. Many of you will be thinking 'Oh, that's Virginia Woolf, the writer. She went mad. Committed suicide.' Well, some of that is true. But it isn't Virginia Woolf.

The photo was taken by society photographer George Beresford at his London studio in 1902 and the young woman is Miss Virginia Stephen, daughter of eminent scholar and editor Sir Leslie Stephen. She is an upper middle class young lady from a literary family and she has great ambitions to be a writer, to revolutionise the English novel, but so far (at the age of 20) she hasn't published a word. It will take a decade before she acquires the surname Woolf on her marriage to Leonard, and her first novel won't appear until 1915. Eventually she will become a literary heavyweight, an acclaimed Modernist writer whose novels, essays and biographical works are read, studied and celebrated all over the world.

Strangely, this photograph of the rather winsome, ethereal young lady with a fragile, pensive look in her pin-tucked light cotton Edwardian dress is the image most commonly used to identify her for the rest of her life. And this photograph is the reason so many people – before they've ever read anything written by Woolf – decide she is 'difficult', 'challenging', 'obtuse' or 'too intellectual'.

However, my favourite photo of Virginia Woolf is this one, (right) taken at a garden party in June 1923, when she is busy formulating ideas for perhaps her best-known novel, *Mrs Dalloway*. She is wearing a flamboyant, feather-trimmed hat, an elaborate lace shawl and is smoking a cigar. Young men are sitting at her feet, hanging upon her every word as she has a reputation for sparkling wit and humorous stories. This is the highly sociable woman who loved parties and poured her acute observations of human psychology and behaviour into such familiar titles as *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*. So it's unfortunate that the image which has dominated

perceptions of Virginia Woolf has caused many people to dismiss her works as 'difficult', 'over sensitive' or 'too complex'.

Now, I must concede that some of her writing is challenging and it's not to everyone's taste. I would not recommend anyone starts with her seventh novel, *The Waves* (1931), which is considered a masterpiece of Modernism and closer to lyrical poetry than accessible prose. But if you don't want to be afraid of Virginia Woolf, I can certainly recommend her short stories which act as a satisfying 'taster' for the full-length novels. Or try her shortest novel *Flush*, a mock-biography of the pet dog belonging to the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, full of puns, humour and drama. If these don't appeal, Woolf was described as 'the greatest pamphleteer in England' and her essays are models of the finest non-fiction writing, covering every topic from art, history, politics and philosophy to feminism, popular culture and photography. And if nothing takes your fancy, it really doesn't matter. Woolf is not for everyone. But at least you'll know that the author wasn't a fragile, winsome, delicate young woman but rather a sociable, cigar-smoking party-lover in a feathered hat.

Claire Nicholson  
Chair, Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain  
[www.virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk](http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk)





## Happy New Year 2025!

### COMING UP!

**Warm space, your space** this winter is here again at Comberton Library. Every **Wednesday: 2.30pm – 5pm**. There will be tea/coffee/cuppa soup and biscuits. A place for you to wait for an activity after school, read/borrow, use WiFi and computer access or a place to keep warm. Donations welcome.

In **February** look out for Valentine origami love heart bookmarks and 'Date with a Book.'

**Festival of stories** – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 10.30am – 11.30am. Mark Making Fun in the library at Comberton Library. This **event is Free** but you will need to book your place in the library.

**'Change and adapt'** the theme for the Science Week event, Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Comberton Library. Families can participate in science activities.

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

**Knit and Natter** group continue to meet in Comberton Library, 10.30am – 11.30am.

February dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. March dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Then every other Monday onwards. **Newcomers** are most welcome. There is always tea, coffee and biscuits available.

We are thankful to Knit and Natter for making hats, scarves and gloves for Jimmy's Cambridge.

**Rhymetime** - 10.30am – 11.00am (except during the school holidays). Come, sing along and have fun. For children from 0 to 4 years. February dates: 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. March dates: 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Then every other week. Also, come and join the **First Steps Library Club**, for ages 0 to 4 years. **Free event.**

**It's Lego Time** with Duplo. Every Saturday from 10.30am. Come and have fun using your imagination. All children must be accompanied by an adult. **This is a free event.**

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

Monday	10am – 1pm
Wednesday	10am – 1pm and 2.30pm – 5.30pm
Friday	2.30pm – 5.30pm
Saturday	10am – 1pm

## WHAT I'M READING



I was drawn to *The Salt Path* by Raynor Winn because it was rather left-field of my usual reading. I'm a fan of English and American novels of the 1920s and 1930s, but this is a modern-day bestseller which recounts the experiences of Winn and her husband, Moth as they walk the 630-mile South West Coast Path from Somerset to Dorset via Devon and Cornwall. It's an astonishing account of triumph over adversity as the journey was undertaken spontaneously after Moth was diagnosed with a terminal illness and the couple had just lost everything. Homeless and bankrupt, they begin walking and discover their own inner resources, the beauty of the English landscape and the kindness of strangers. It's an inspiring, thoughtful story told with elegance and wit.

If the book doesn't entice you a film of *The Salt Path* starring Gillian Anderson as Raynor and Jason Isaacs as Moth was released in 2024. And now that I've finished with my paperback copy of the book, you will find it on the bookshelves in Toft People's Hall.

Claire Nicholson

## A year of poetry in Toft

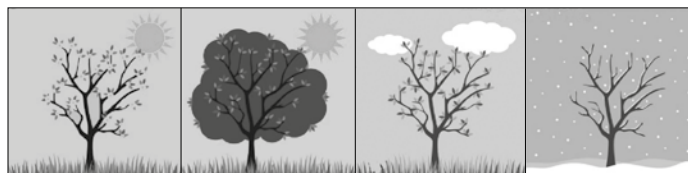
### An invitation from Bhanu

We have so many poets in Toft, and so many people who love poetry. If anyone would like to collaborate on creating an anthology of poems set in Toft, please be in touch.

I would be glad to host a first gathering to write together, in the People's Hall. And we can go from there?

We can write/dream this together. -- Bhanu.

My email is [thisbhanu@yahoo.com](mailto:thisbhanu@yahoo.com), or you can text/leave a message at 07714103477.





## BIN COLLECTIONS FOR FEBRUARY

### **Black Bin:**

6th, 20th

### **Blue Bin:**

13th, 27th

### **Green Bin:**

13th

## NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

Advertisements are published quarterly. Copy for inclusion in the next available edition of the Calendar must reach us by 17th April at the very latest. Advertisements will NOT be published unless full payment has been received in advance. Please note: We are currently unable to accept PDF file types. Quarter-page adverts MUST be Portrait-style, half-page adverts MUST be Landscape style. In the first instance, advertisers should contact Jean Verney at: [calendarads@aol.com](mailto:calendarads@aol.com) to discuss their requirements.

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

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Anglian Water (for sewage): 08457 145 145  
(Emergency number for burst water pipes: 01223 706050)  
Ashcroft Veterinary Surgery: 01954 210250  
Bourn GPs' Surgery: 01954 719313  
Cambridge AIDS help-line: (01223) 508805  
Cambs County Council: 0345 045 5200  
Cambridge Dial a Ride 01223 506335  
Cambridge Water: 01223 706050  
Care Network Cambridgeshire 01954 211919.  
Citizens Advice Bureau: 0844 848 7979  
Comberton GPs' Surgery: 01223 262500  
Comberton Village College: 01223 262503  
Community Warden (Age UK CAP) 07812 495997  
County Councillor Michael Atkins 07968 264637  
CVC Community Education: 01223 264721  
District Councillor: Lina Nieto 07506 420655  
Household Waste/Pest Control: 0345 045 0063  
Lifespan Health Care, Family and Child Team: 01223 264460  
MP [pippa.heytings.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:pippa.heytings.mp@parliament.uk)  
Meridian Primary School: 01223 262423  
Police: 101 (Emergencies: 999)  
(Local Beat Officer is PCSO Sam Kennedy)  
Road/Pothole Reporting: 0345 045 5212  
Street Lighting: 0800 7838 247  
Street Cleaning: 03450 450 063  
South Cambs District Council: 01954 713 000  
South Cambs Fire and Rescue: 01480 444 500  
Toft Car Scheme: 07790 171710  
Trading Standards: 0345 0455206  
UK Power Networks (Emergencies): 0800 31 63 105

## SOME USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

Cambridgeshire Constabulary:

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us->

Cambridge City Food Bank:

<https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/>

South Cambridgeshire District Council:

<http://www.scambs.gov.uk>

Toft Shop: <http://www.toftshop.co.uk>

Toft Village Website: <http://www.toft.org.uk>

## A call for contributions

We hope you're enjoying the new design of the Toft Village Calendar and all the usual content. We're now keen to add new features to which we invite you to contribute.

One of them is 'What I'm Reading': let people know in just a few sentences (doesn't have to be more than 50-100 words) what you're reading and why you're enjoying it – or disliking it.

We'd also like to feature a 'Nature Diary'. What birds, animals, plants, natural phenomena have you observed in and around Toft this month? Again, just 50-100 words or so would do.

And if you'd like to write a guest editorial, we'll consider contributions of 300-500 words on any topic.

Naturally, we reserve the right to not publish any offensive, politically-biased or inappropriate material; otherwise, feel free to offer a view of the world that would interest Calendar readers. Send your contribution to [calendareditor@toft.org.uk](mailto:calendareditor@toft.org.uk).

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CALENDAR

The Calendar is always pleased to receive contributions from readers, advertisers and fund raisers. We reserve the right to edit, amend, abridge or otherwise butcher any submissions to accord with technical or editorial requirements, or sometimes just on a whim. We do not normally accept anonymous contributions or those using pen-names.

Contributors are asked to note that all text formatting is removed from items on receipt. Consider plain text files as your first choice where possible. Please avoid proprietary file types (e.g. PDF, PUB, DOCX, XLS etc) unless you feel it essential. Graphics (if essential) are best submitted as PNG or JPEG files. Many thanks.

*And, finally...*

Please remember that contributions for the next issue of the Calendar must reach the Editor by 20 February.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition.

Email: [calendareditor@toft.org.uk](mailto:calendareditor@toft.org.uk)

Post: The Gig House, The Old Horse Yard, Comberton Road, Toft CB23 2RY



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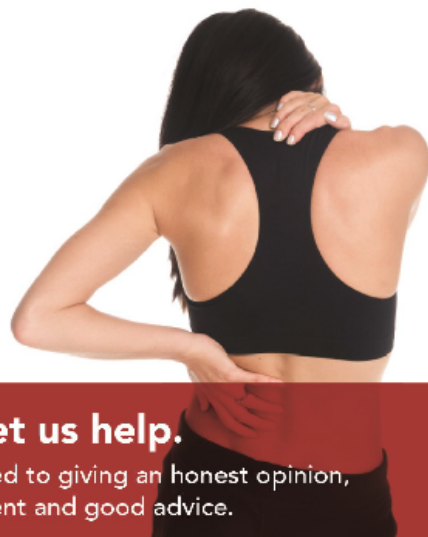
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025

Toft Village Calendar provides information and updates about regular weekly/monthly Toft events. This list is where you can find details about special events which are more 'one-off' in nature and which will really benefit from your attendance and/or involvement. Not all events have been finalised and this list will be updated later in the year. Details about regular events will continue to be produced in print within Toft Village Calendar or online via <https://toft.org.uk/> or <https://toft.club/> or <https://www.facebook.com/people/Toft-Community-Page/100064709915181/>

## FEBRUARY

### Wednesday 12

Friendship Club Talk  
'Grandparents, holding hands with our past' by Barbara Preece  
14.30 – 16.00.  
Toft People's Hall

### Thursday 20

Girl Guide Thinking Day 14.30.  
Short service and tea. St Andrew's Church

### Saturday 22

Casino Night with Fish & Chips

## MARCH

### Saturday 1

Slow Session 19.30 to 21.00 – a traditional (mostly) Irish session, where tunes are played slowly. Players of all levels welcome. Music is provided. Followed by a (slightly) faster session from 21.00.

### Wednesday 12

Friendship Club 'Guess What?' with Peter & Ann. 14.30 – 16.00.  
Toft People's Hall

### Saturday 22

'Sound of the Sirens' in concert.  
Tickets online via <https://toft.club/>  
Doors open 19.30 Toft People's Hall

### Monday 24

Last 'Warm Hub' until later in the year.

## APRIL

### Wednesday 9

Toft Friendship Club AGM. 14.30 – 16.00

### Sunday 27

Annual Parochial Church Meeting to elect Churchwardens. 12.00pm  
St Andrew's Church

### Sunday 27

The Club Sunday Fun Day

## MAY

### Saturday 3

Toft Spring Feast (details tbc)

### Sunday 4

Toft Spring Feast continues with Village Walk, Picnic, Maypole Dancing, Thanksgiving Service and Tea Party (details tbc)



### Thursday 8

Lighting of Beacon and Lamp  
Lights of Peace at 9.30pm and the raising of a unique VE Day flag

### Saturday 10

Commemoration of 80th anniversary of ending of WWII (details tbc)

### Friday 16

Jacob & Drinkwater in concert.  
Tickets online via <https://toft.club/>  
Doors open 19.30 Toft People's Hall

### Sunday 18

Toft Big Breakfast 09.00 – 12.00.  
Sumptuous Village Breakfast for All. Donations to Farm Africa & Fairtrade.

## JUNE

### Sunday 15

Hedgehog Awareness Day activities



## JUNE

### Saturday 21

Toft Choir & Toft Session Summer Concert 16.00 St Andrew's Church



## JULY

### Saturday 19

Toft Sports  
A day for all the family 2pm till late August

### Saturday 2

The Club Barbecue  
september

### Fri 5 – Sunday 7

The Club Beer & Cider Festival  
October  
Friday 3  
A very special duo in concert tbc.  
Doors open 19.30 Toft People's Hall

Tuesday 14

While & Matthews in concert.  
Doors open 19.30 Toft People's Hall

## NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

### Saturday 13

Toft Choir & Toft Session  
Christmas Concert 16.00 St Andrew's Church

### Saturday 13

The Club Christmas Dinner

### Saturday 20

The Club Christmas Entertainment

 **CUT OUT AND KEEP**