



The Abingtons and Hildersham News



www.theabingtons.org.uk

December 2025



Photo: Andy Merryweather

**Red partridge in Great Abington – looking for a pear tree,
perhaps?**

From the Editor

This month is crammed with festive events. Celebrations start with the Hildersham Christmas Fair on 5 December, closely followed by a Christmas Market and Festive Fun Run at Granta Park on the 10th and 11th, the Hildersham Christmas Lunch on the 12th, the Big Breakfast in the morning and the Balsham Singers' Christmas Concert in the afternoon of the 13th, the Festive Meal at Granta Park on the 16th, GLAMS choir carols at the Institute on 17th, the Carol Service on Sunday 21st and Walking Carols on Tuesday 23rd. Something for everyone.

Ada Kennedy featured in the *News* when she celebrated her 100th birthday two years ago. Sadly, this month we record her death at the remarkable age of 102. Her family pay tribute to her on page 6.

Please note some important information about new initiatives in the villages: the Community Warden scheme (page 7) and Love Abington's plan to raise funding to supplement the free school meals scheme during school holidays (page 17). And on page 15, Granta Medical Practices provide details of practice opening times and dates for ordering and collecting prescriptions over Christmas and New Year.

Thank you, Andy Merryweather, for the beautiful photo of a seasonal red partridge on our front cover to mark this festive month. And special thanks to Amaris Victory for her calm and swift resolution of the editor's technical problems with this issue.

Merry Christmas to one and all.

Sally Simmons

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All items for the January 2026 edition of *The Abingtons and Hildersham News* should be sent to the editor no later than Monday 15 December 2025 at news@theabingtons.org.uk.

From the Seven Churches

Over Advent and Christmas I often revisit well-loved writings. As a child I used to perform, with my brother and sister, the poem by Clement-Clarke Moore, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* for my parents on Christmas Eve. As an adult I have enjoyed re-reading *Approaching Christmas* by Jane Williams, a companion to the Christmas season rich in joy and wisdom, as well as a collection of poems and commentaries by Janet Morley entitled *Haphazard by Starlight: A poem a day from Advent to Epiphany*.

The intriguing title, *Haphazard by Starlight*, actually comes from the poem *BC–AD*, by U. A. Fanthorpe. Ursula Fanthorpe was a poet and a Quaker, who used to write a new Christmas poem each year to include with her Christmas cards to friends. They were usually short and sought a fresh, unsentimental take on the familiar story. This approach could also provide a jolt of defamiliarisation for the reader, reminding us of the extraordinary nature of the gospel truth.

As part of the Christmas carol service at Hildersham church some years ago, members of our Children's Church Council gave a reading of *BC–AD*. The poem begins with the dramatic announcement, 'This was the moment when Before/Turned into After'.

The poem then continues in a slightly meandering style with references to familiar characters from the birth narrative (the shepherds are described as 'a few farm workers' and the magi as 'three/Members of an obscure Persian sect'). The meandering style is interrupted, however, by the jolt of the last two lines, which presents the moment those familiar characters, perhaps to their own astonishment, 'Walked haphazard by starlight straight/Into the kingdom of heaven'.

Amid all that is comfortingly familiar about Christmas, I hope we can be alert to the astonishing good news of the gospels, even if it does sometimes seem we are walking towards this truth as if 'haphazard by starlight'. For the account of Jesus' birth speaks of a moment when everything changed. A child, born in humble circumstances, is the Christ child who is greeted, as Luke's gospel says, as 'Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'. Good news conveyed by these simple words, which invite a lifetime's reflection: Jesus is 'Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us"'. Good news worth responding to, celebrating and sharing, and which can shape the way we live in all the times and seasons of our lives.

Revd Iain McColl

From the Vicarage

As December arrives, the village begins to take on that unmistakable glow – lights in windows, wreaths on doors, the scent of baking drifting through kitchens, and the joyful chaos of children's excitement – and adults' too! It's a season filled with warmth, but also one that invites us to slow down and pay attention.

In the church calendar, December begins not with Christmas, but with Advent, a time of waiting, watching and hoping. It's a quieter kind of preparation, not about wrapping presents but about making room in ourselves for joy, peace and compassion. Reminding us that even in a world that can feel uncertain or restless, light still breaks through the cracks.

This year, perhaps more than ever, I've been struck by how much we need that light – not just the fairy lights in our streets, lovely though they are, but the light that comes from kindness, neighbourliness and small acts of care. We see it whenever someone checks on a neighbour, gives a gift or offers a warm welcome to someone feeling a bit lost. These are the things that make our villages shine.

It is important to realise that for some, Advent can stir up sadness, loneliness or memories that weigh heavily. Empty chairs at the table, financial pressures, strained relationships or simply the feeling of not being as merry as everyone else seems to be... all of these can make December feel harder than it looks from the outside. As a community, it's important we notice those who might be struggling, offer a listening ear, and remind one another that it's okay not to feel festive.

As we move towards Christmas, may the story at the heart of the season be God choosing to come close to us in love – reminding us that no one is forgotten, and no one is beyond the reach of hope.

My family and I wish you all a peaceful Advent, a joyful Christmas and moments of rest and wonder amid the busyness! With every blessing.

Revd Hannah

News from the Pews – Abington and Hildersham

We have several exciting things coming up!

Christmas Fair – Friday 5 December, Holy Trinity, Hildersham, 5.00–8.00pm. With local craft stalls, mince pies, mulled wine and live music all held in the atmospheric glow of candlelight – please do pop the date in your diary and come along. Find special gifts, enjoy the beauty and celebrate the start of the Christmas season with friends and neighbours!

Tea & Cake – Monday 15 December, 3.00–4.30pm, Hildersham Village Hall. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet familiar and new faces, share homemade cakes and enjoy some relaxed conversation. Families are especially welcome, with toys and crafts available.

Creative Church – Sunday 21 December, 9.30am (for breakfast), The Abington Institute. Christingle Service! We will start at the Institute and have breakfast, our story and build our Christingles and then we will walk to Great Abington Church to light our candles and sing! Please do join Revd Hannah and Rosemary Mead as they lead you through the session. We will begin with breakfast at 9.30am, ready for a 10.00am start.

Carol Service at Great Abington: 21 December, 6.30pm – join us afterwards for mince pies and mulled wine or head to The Three Tuns for more songs, festive cheer and free mince pies and mulled wine! Huge thanks to Chris and Karen for providing this – it will their 21st year of doing so!!

Walking Carols: 23 December, 4.00pm – all are welcome to join us as we walk from Little Abington Church to the top of the High Street, singing Carols all the way, to share festive joy to all, especially those who can't get out to services and events. We will be led by the star of wonder upon a tractor, Ted and Tom, the two miniature donkeys, and Jimmy's musical tuk-tuk!

Crib Service: Christmas Eve, 10.30am, Little Abington Church – fun always guaranteed and a wonderful way to join together as we await the big day.

Midnight Mass: Christmas Eve, 11.30pm, Little Abington Church.

Christmas day: Morning Worship, 11.00am, Great Abington Church.

December services at the Abingtons

Sunday 7 – United Holy Communion, 11.00am (Balsham)

Sunday 14 – Holy Communion, Great Abington – 11.00am

Sunday 21 – Creative Church, Abington Institute, 9.30am; Carol Service, Great Abington, 6.30pm

Wednesday 24 – Crib Service, Little Abington, 10.30am; Midnight Mass, Little Abington, 11.30pm

Thursday 25 – Morning Worship, Great Abington, 11.00am

Sunday 28 – Holy Communion, 11.00am (Balsham)

December services at Hildersham

Sunday 7 – United Communion Service, 11.00am (Balsham)

Sunday 14 – Café Church, 11.00am

Sunday 21 – Carol Service, 3.00pm

Thursday 25 – Christmas Day Communion, 9.30am

Sunday 28 – United Holy Communion, 11.00am (Balsham)

Creative Church!



Sunday 21 December 2025 9.30am at Abington Institute.

Please come and join Revd Hannah and Rosemary Mead to listen to the story of how Jesus is our light, enjoy making a Christingle and other Christmas crafts, and share songs by the wonder of candlelight. If you are new to the village, do come along. You are assured of a warm welcome and festive fare.

Hildersham Church News

Christmas Lunch

You are invited to the Hildersham Christmas Lunch in the Village Hall on Friday 12 December. The menu is the usual wonderful festive fare – turkey with all the trimmings, Christmas pudding and/or a surprise something, washed down with wine, soft drinks or coffee. It's £5 per person and there will be a raffle. Doors open at 12.30pm, with lunch served at 1.00pm.

This is a very popular event and the hall can only take a limited number of people. If you would like to come, please contact: Jill Heale 893596 edheale@btinternet.com, Helen Humphrys helenhumphrys@gmail.com or Jenny Logan jenny.logan@btinternet.com.

Christmas Carols at the Institute

GLAMS Choir invites everyone to join them for carols, mince pies and mulled wine on 17 December at 7.00pm in the Institute. All are welcome to come and sing, or just enjoy getting into the festive spirit. There will be a charity collection on the night.

Ada Kennedy 4 September 1923–6 October 2025



We lost our mum on 6 October. We believe she was the oldest lady in the village at the time. She had her 102nd birthday in Arthur Rank, where she spent her last days, and they made it special for her.

Ada went into Arthur Rank on 11 August from Addenbrookes after a fall in July. With the wonderful care she received she perked up and was being considered for a move into a nursing home but she passed away before that could happen. She had been living independently with her little dog Daisy in Little Abington with family calling on her every single day right up to her fall in July.

In her early days of unsteadiness she could be seen whizzing up to the Village Shop on her mobility scooter and occasionally going to the local pub with family and meeting the local chaps who she got to know and asked about well into her later years. She was not one to socialise much but she took an interest in all the village activities through the *News*. She loved looking through the *News*, getting her magnifying glass out to read the print and asking who the people were in the photos.

Pat Kennedy (daughter-in-law)

Abington Annexe Community Childcare

Pre-School – Urgent Notice

Please use us or lose us. As many of you know, for over 20 years, the village pre-school has been operating out of the annexe building in the school playground. Since September we have had very low numbers and it is becoming financially unsustainable for us to continue operating if we do not attract more children in the immediate future. It would be a great shame if we had to close the pre-school and a great loss to the village.

We currently operate 8.50am–3.00pm, term time only. But we could consider opening later and earlier if that worked for a group of children. We could also stay open in the holidays if that was also needed. We accept children from the age of two.

Please spread the word about our fantastic pre-school. We have experienced, passionate staff, many of whom have been with us for a number of years. We are in an idyllic setting and have great links with the Primary School. We are run by a committed committee of volunteers.

We have our AGM on Thursday 4 December at 7.00pm in the Annexe. We'd love to have your ideas and practical help to remain open.

If you'd like to arrange a visit to pre-school or enquire about a place, please call the Annexe on 894 246. And if you need a flyer to share or have further questions, please email me at abingtonannexechair@gmail.com. Katie Russell, Chair of Abington Annexe Community Childcare

Age UK Cambridge and Peterborough Community Warden Scheme



My name is Debbie McKenzie, and I am the Community Warden for the Abingtons and Hildersham.

I have worked with older people for several years in various roles, such as Meals on Wheels and as a home help. I began working for Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a Relief Warden in 2022. My role as a Community Warden involves supporting residents of the Abingtons and Hildersham to live independently in their own homes, through daily contact (Monday to Friday). This can be a phone call or a personal visit, depending on the needs of the older person. I offer practical support like reading post, making appointments on their behalf, light shopping and prescription collections. Of course, these are not exhaustive, as it is a multi-faceted service and is very much person-centred. Some older people just want a chat while others need help putting the bins out. No two days are the same and that's what I love about the role.

If you or someone you know thinks that this paid-for service could be useful, please feel free to contact me by phone on 07519 099 494 or email me at Debbiemckenzie@ageukcap.org.uk. You can benefit from a two-week free trial to see whether the service is suitable for your needs.

Photo: Debbie (left) with client Annette Thomson (by permission)

The Big Breakfast

**Saturday 13 December at Jeremiah's Café
in Abington Village Institute**

A bargain at £6.00 per head, the BIG breakfast offers egg, bacon, sausage, mushrooms, tomato and hash browns with toast, plus a mug of tea/coffee, or fruit juice for children.

Pre-booking is essential, so please book your table in advance, with your arrival time to be in one of these slots:

9.00–10.00am

10.00–11.00am

To book please call Gaynor Farrant on 07817 517 871

Or email gaynorfarrant198@btinternet.com

CASH/CARD payment on the door

Ukrainian Community in Abington

Four Ukrainians are living in Abington with hosts or independently. There is still a great need for hosts to support new requests from Ukraine and anyone interested in hosting should contact South Cambs Homes for Ukraine: text ROOM to 88802. Anton King tel. 891 514

Thank You from Saffron Walden Rotary

There was another great response from our South Cambs villages to our Ukraine appeal at Abington School on 8 November. Our van was totally filled plus more and over £2,000 in donations, too.

Thank you to everyone for your very kind and generous support.

Jeremiah's Community Café



Our community run café is based in the Village Institute next to the Primary School. The café opens just twice a week at the moment: Thursdays for lunch between 12.00pm and 2.00pm and Saturday mornings 10.00am–12.00pm. We add occasional special afternoon teas and have a special Big Breakfast in December, in the run up to Christmas. Our volunteers are a dedicated band of villagers who serve our customers with chat as well as food!

We are in need of some keen extra volunteers! Could this be you?

Training is provided and the commitment is usually about one session per month. Many prefer Thursdays or Saturdays only, and this is just fine. We did have a Friday café but that has recently been suspended until we can find some volunteers to take those sessions on. No cooking is needed at this Friday session if we can manage to staff and restart it. Cooks on the other two sessions do some online training but this is not for all volunteers – as you wish!

We have a baking group and provide cakes and scones each week. The roles on the sessions are the **cook**, who also takes overall responsibility for the session, the **server**, and the **drinks maker/washer upper**. Some volunteers prefer to stick to one role and others switch around as they wish, session by session.

We make sure large parties book ahead but mostly we have regular customers who appreciate what's on offer. This includes a bit of flexibility, as we provide outside tables for dog walkers, moving tables as customers want to sit together, or just a general welcome to the village. If you would be interested, don't be shy – we're a friendly group with experience to share and will support anyone new on the team. The training is easy and the level of commitment is up to you. We establish availability every three months, then develop a rota that suits everyone. There's no pay I'm afraid but you would be contributing to the village sense of community!

Please drop me an email if you might be interested at helenstchowe@btinternet.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Helen Howe



Thank you, Mary and Sylvia

After 17 years of running Jeremiah's Café on Friday mornings, Mary Miles (*right in photo*) and Sylvia Gilmore (*left*) said a final farewell on 31 October. They will be missed by everybody, especially the ladies of the Low Impact Aerobics group who gathered there every Friday after class.

Mobile Library

The mobile library comes to Hildersham on the second Tuesday and to the Abingtons on the fourth Tuesday of every month and stops at the following places:

Hildersham, Flourish Farm Shop 9.40–10.20 Next date: Tuesday 9 December	West Field, Little Abington 9.40–10.20 The Shop, Great Abington 10.30–11.00 Magna Close, Great Abington 11.05–11.40 Next date: Tuesday 23 December
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District and County Councillors' Reports November 2025

Local Plan

The District Council has recently released its draft Local Plan –the development plan for the next 30 years indicating the parcels of land in South Cambridgeshire that they feel can accommodate housing and commercial development to feed the population and economic growth during this time. The major development in our area is a site north of Abington called Grange Farm, which can accommodate up to 6,000 new houses. This would be a significant development in our area, as it would represent a new town, twice the size of Linton. This location is deemed to be 'sustainable', as it's close to employment sites like Granta Park and Babraham Research Park and is also located on major roads – the A1307 and the A11. There will be a public consultation on this proposal, plus all of the others in South Cambridgeshire, over December and January – more details to follow.

New 'Forest City'

Some people have picked up on a locally promoted 'suggestion' for a new 'Forest City' on land between Newmarket and Haverhill able to house over 1 million new people. This proposal has absolutely no legs. It's an unsolicited proposal by two unqualified individuals and carries no weight in planning terms. It's likely that they are attempting to capitalise on the government's plans to expand Cambridge but developments associated with this expansion will be properly drawn up and consulted on by an official development corporation – not this *Dragon's Den* style pitch. In our opinion, this is going nowhere.

Linton Greenway

The Linton Greenway is progressing, albeit slowly. The next section that will move forward is the section between LVC and the recreation ground in Linton. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is looking to present a proposal for this route, although we understand that the only physical changes to the highway will be the widening of the footpath between LVC and Joiners Road and the stretch from the bottom of Joiners Road and the recreation ground itself. The next section of the Greenway to be completed is the section through/around Abington to link up with the A11 crossing and onwards. This route hasn't been agreed but is moving forward, slowly, so watch this space.

Cambridge South Station

The new train station being built at the Addenbrooke's site has had some construction delays and now won't open until June 2026.

Contact details

District Council – John Batchelor – johndbatchelor23@gmail.com

District and County Council – Henry Batchelor – henrybatchelor89@gmail.com

Balsham Singers



Our 30th Anniversary Christmas Concert takes place on Saturday 13 December at 4.00pm in Holy Trinity Church, Balsham. Tickets are £12; under 16s £1. Tickets are available from Balsham and Great Abington post offices and online at ticketsource.co.uk/balshamsingers or through choir members and are selling fast. Last Christmas we had a full house so we'd advise buying a ticket in advance to be sure of a seat.

We will be holding a raffle so please bring some cash along with you. All proceeds of the raffle will be sent to

Royal Papworth Charity, which also celebrates 30 years in 2025.

We are always grateful for the loyal support of our audience and hope that everyone who comes along will enjoy our concert.

Diary for December 2025

Date		Venue: Abington Institute unless stated	Time	Page
Mon	1	Baby and Toddler Group – Abington Annexe Physio Pilates	9.15am	11
			9.30am	11
Tue	2	Evening Pilates	7.00pm	11
Wed	3	Yoga Line Dancing	9.30am	11
			1.00pm	11
Thu	4	Walking Group Community Childcare AGM – Abington Annexe Granta Vale Harmony	9.50am	12
			7.00pm	6
			7.30pm	11
Fri	5	Christmas Fair – Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham	5.00pm	5
Mon	8	Baby and Toddler Group – Abington Annexe Physio Pilates Abington and Hildersham WI	9.15am	12
			9.30am	11
			7.30pm	12
Tue	9	Mobile Library, Hildersham Tuesday Club	9.40am	7
			2.00pm	12
Wed	10	Yoga Christmas Market – Granta Park Club House Line Dancing	9.30am	11
			11.30am	18
			1.00pm	11
Thu	11	Festive Fun Run – Granta Park Granta Vale Harmony	11.45am	18
			7.30pm	11
Fri	12	Christmas Lunch – Hildersham Village Hall	12.30pm	6
Sat	13	The Big Breakfast Walking Group Balsham Singers Christmas Concert – Holy Trinity Church, Balsham	9.00am	7
			9.50am	12
			4.00pm	9
Mon	15	Baby and Toddler Group – Abington Annexe Physio Pilates Tea & Cake Afternoon – Hildersham Village Hall	9.15am	11
			9.30am	11
			3.00pm	5
Tue	16	Festive Meal – Granta Park Evening Pilates	6.00pm	16
			7.00pm	11
Wed	17	GLAMS Carols	7.00pm	6
Thu	18	Craft Group Granta Vale Harmony	1.30pm	12
			7.30pm	11
Fri	19	Film Nights – doors open 7.00pm	7.30pm	11
Sat	20	Film Nights Children's Matinée – doors open 2.00pm	2.30pm	11
Sun	21	Creative Church Carol Service – Great Abington Church	9.30am	5
			6.30pm	5
Tue	23	Mobile Library, The Abingtons Walking Carols – Little Abington Church	9.40am	7
			4.00pm	5
Wed	24	Crib Service – Little Abington Church Midnight Mass – Little Abington Church	10.30am	5
			11.30pm	5

For details of contacts for all the clubs and events listed in the Diary, please see the inside back cover of the *News*, or the pages on which the relevant articles appear.

Institute bookings Contact by email: institute@theabingtons.org.uk.

Jeremiah's Café: Opening times in December 2025

Thursday lunchtime 12.00 noon–2.00pm (4, 11)

Saturday mornings 10.00am–12 noon (6, 13 – **Big Breakfast**)

Contacts for Café: helenstchowe@btinternet.com and helen.rogers.uk@gmail.com

Wheelie bin dates for December 2025 (Abingtons and Hildersham)

Wed 3	Wed 10	Wed 17	Wed 24
Black	Blue/Green	Black	Blue

Yoga – Wednesdays, 9.30am

Contact Joan 890 629 or email joangraham72@gmail.com if you would like to drop in.

Aerobics and Pilates – Fridays (Aerobics 9.30am; Pilates 10.30am & 11.45am).

Aerobics, toning and stretching, exercises to raise your heart rate and tone your body, fun and friendly. Pilates will help to alleviate back pain, improve core strength, posture and flexibility. Aerobics is pay as you go; Pilates please book for five weeks.

Contact Disa Bennett on 07798 754 029 or www.zumbaandpilatescambridge.com.

Evening Pilates

There are two classes on Tuesdays at 7.00pm and 8.15pm in the Village Institute. All equipment provided. Contact Liz Kirk on 07903 079853 to book your place (£9 per session).

Physio-led Face to Face Pilates – Mondays 9.30am–12.40pm

I am excited to announce my six-week Bone Health Pilates class commencing on Monday 5 January 2026 to 9 February, 11.45am to 12.45pm at the Abington Village Institute. It is specifically designed to support those with osteoporosis or osteopenia or low bone density, and anyone looking to improve their strength, balance and posture.

Christiana Heinz, cambridgepilates@outlook.com.

Line Dancing – Wednesdays 1pm–2.30pm (term time)

Qualified line dance instructor, Lisa Mason, now runs drop-in classes suitable for all ages and welcomes beginners to intermediate level. Bring a drink and suitable shoes. Contact lisa.lmsd@gmail.com or tel. 07958 788 292.

Scrabble Club

We meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month and new members are very welcome. Next meeting: 27 January 2026.

Sheena Fraser

Social Cycling

There is no December ride. Our next ride will be Monday 19 January starting at 9.30am from 1 Bourn Bridge Road.

Gaynor Farrant

Granta Vale Harmony

Granta Vale Harmony is a mixed *a capella* singing group. We meet on Thursday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30pm at the Abington Institute, and anyone is welcome to join in. Contact Peter Lester, tel. 07884 932 215 or email haverhi11@talktalk.net.

Abington Pre-School Baby and Toddler Group

This welcoming group runs every Monday during term time for children aged 0–5 years. We are located in the Abington Annexe building, accessible via the garden gate of the preschool, to the right of the Primary School playground.

New earlier time of 9.15am–11.00am. £3 per family, first visit free. No need to book. Light snack and drinks provided. Please bring a lidded cup for adult beverages. May get messy but aprons are available. Tel. 01223 894.246 or email abingtonannexeooffice@gmail.com for more information.

Reading Group

During 2025 we read: *Prophet Song* by Paul Lynch; *Exposure* by Helen Dunmore; *Exit* by Belinda Bauer; *Hello Beautiful* by Ann Napolitano; *Perfume* by Peter Suskind; *Ex-Wife* by Ursula Parrott; *44 Scotland Street* by Alexander McCall Smith; *Oh William!* by Elizabeth Strout; *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* by Kate Atkinson; *Shakespeare: The Man Who Pays the Rent* by Judi Dench; *The Names* by Florence Knapp

Our Christmas meeting is on 9 December and our first meeting of the New Year is on 13 January at Kate's house: *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams.

Valerie Hefford

The Tuesday Club

For our meeting on 9 December, Christmas Tea will be served at 2.00pm. All are welcome at our meetings and the first attendance is free. For more information please contact Jenny Milns (tel. 890252).

Abington Walking Group



After many years leading the group with George Woodley, Robin Harman has decided to step back. We thank him very much for his commitment to planning routes on our behalf. Going forward we hope to share the load with members guiding us on walks that they know or have found.

We walk about five miles, setting off from the Abington Institute at 10.00am in shared transport. The December walks will be on Thursday 4 and on Saturday 13 December when walkers will have the opportunity to join the Abington Big Breakfast. The first walk in 2026 will be on Saturday 24 January.

We look forward to seeing you. Our WhatsApp group keeps you up to date with plans. For more information or to join the group please contact Genevieve Dalton, gdalton365@gmail.com.

Abington & Hildersham Women's Institute

Each year one meeting is organised by the members, rather than the Committee. In November our speaker was Graham Wylde, who is a philatelist and bought a bundle of ten small, stamped envelopes at a stamp fair. It contained letters from a young girl, Maggie, to her father Fred, not a well man, who often went away for convalescence. Maggie was born in March 1863 but sadly her mother died giving birth. They lived in Islington with grandparents, an aunt and a servant and Maggie often went on holiday when her father was ill. The first envelope, dated 1870, contained a birthday card with a short message from Maggie to Fred. The others contained increasingly long and complex letters as Maggie grew older, always full of love for her father and telling him funny stories about her adventures, the people she met and how she longed to see him again. In 1904 Maggie married Frederick Turpin but they had no children. Fred died in March 1947 and Maggie died six months later. This heart-warming and amusing account was followed by delicious refreshments and a challenging Trivia Quiz. The evening was rounded off by Hazel's recital of Frank and the Beanstalk, a humorous fantasy poem written for the annual NIAB Harvest Supper.

Next meeting: 8 December, 7.30pm – Christmas Party at the Institute. Marilyn Broadhurst

The Abington Group (Ladies)

There is no meeting in December. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 21 January when Nick Brown and Nadia Marcari- Brown will tell us about their experiences at Wimbledon and how Nick became a member of the prestigious Club. Visitors pay £3, including refreshments. For more information about our programme, please email fredaorgee@gmail.com. Freda Orgee, Coordinator

Abington Craft Group

Our next meeting is on Thursday 18 December. It will be a review of the three stalls we will have done beforehand and be thinking forward to 2026. For further information, contact Glynis Brookman at glynis.brookman@btinternet.com or mobile 07970 614 194.

Film Nights

Film Nights at the Abington Institute. Friday 19 December, 7.30pm (doors 7.00pm); Saturday 20 December, Children's Matinée, 2.30pm (doors 2.00pm).

For more information, please visit <http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/> where you can subscribe to Film Nights updates.

Great Abington Parish Council – An Active Council

Community Governance Review of Great and Little Abington

The District Council's Civic Affairs Committee considered the responses to the initial consultation on 23 October 2025. Following this there is a Phase 2 consultation which runs until 18 December 2025. Residents and stakeholders are invited to share their views on the proposals via a survey available either online (see below) or by obtaining a hard copy from the Village Institute or Abington Village Stores and Post Office. It is important to take part so that local people have a say in the decision-making process. Go to <https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/abington-community-governance-review/events>

MUGA Renewal Project



The first phase of the project is nearly complete and the final top surface and court markings will be completed in the spring when the weather is warmer.

The project has been funded by Great Abington Parish Council and The National Lottery Community Fund. Keep an eye on social media for updates.

Planning

Please attend a planning meeting if you would like to make a comment that we can consider in our debate before agreeing on the Parish Council's recommendation to SCDC. If you have views on a planning application, you should also make your comment on the South Cambs website (link below) as this will ensure that the planners take your views into consideration in their decision-making. For more information on the applications, go to <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/view-or-comment-on-a-planning-application/>

Planning Applications

25/03655/FUL Illumina Granta Park – Installation of an extract ventilation through existing roof.

25/03637/FUL Abington Lodge, 63 High Street – Installation of photovoltaic panels, an inverter and associated infrastructures

25/03762/FUL Illumina Centre, Granta Park – Installation of a storage container with surrounding timber fence and timber louvered roof to match adjacent service compound

25/03922/FUL Land adj to 2 Pampisford Road – Erection of a single storey self-build/custom building dwelling.

District Council decisions

25/034 /HFUL 33 South Road – Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a part single storey part two storey side extension. First floor front extension

Great Abington Parish Council Meetings

Held in Abington Village Institute

Tony Orgee (Chairman) tonyorgee@gmail.com

Planning Committees: These are arranged as required when applications are received. See Parish Council notice board for dates or contact the Parish Clerk.

Next Parish Council meetings: Monday 19 January 2026, 7.15pm. There will be opportunities at the start and close of the meeting for members of the public to speak to the council about matters of concern.

Notices, agendas and minutes are posted on the Parish Council notice board located at the entrance to Magna Close and on the Parish Council's website <http://greatabingtonparishcouncil.org> or available from the Parish Clerk. Paula Harper (Clerk): harper802@btinternet.com (892 000).

The Abingtons and Hildersham News on the website

To see the News before a printed copy is available, and to see the photographs in colour, go to www.theabingtons.org.uk/news and follow the link to the pdf for the month you want.

Little Abington Parish Council

Opposition to Kingsway Solar Farm

Public consultation has now ended but opposition to the proposed development hasn't. To get involved and for details of the proposed solar farm go to kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk.

Grange Farm development

The land surrounding Grange Farm, along the A11 and north of the A1307, is now the favoured site for a new town in the latest Local Plan. This follows the recent scrapping of a waste water treatment plant in north-east of Cambridge, which would have opened up land for housing. For details on what's planned near us, with links to other relevant sites, visit the 'Cambridge Town Owl' blog.

Bancroft Farm site

Local residents and some parish councillors met with the developers Blues Property in late October to meet Will Lawson, Head of Development, who outlined their progress (a lot of rubbish removed to unchoke the trees) and future management of the site. It was encouraging to hear from Will that he hopes to preserve more trees than those designated in the planning permission.

Little Abington Parish Council Meetings

Held in Abington Institute at 7.30pm

Next Meeting: Monday 26 January 2026

If you would like to participate in a meeting please contact the clerk. The meeting agendas and papers are on the noticeboard on Church Lane.

Our email addresses:

Sheila Bolden (Chair): [07754 659929/cllr.sbolden@littleabington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:07754_659929@cllr.sbolden@littleabington-pc.gov.uk)

Jessica Ashbridge (Clerk): clerk@littleabington-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.littleabington-pc.gov.uk

Parish Councils Amalgamation – survey deadline

Phase 2 of the consultation on the proposal to create a new Parish Council covering the combined area of Great Abington and Little Abington is now being conducted by South Cambs District Council. The planned "Community Governance Review" could group the present two Parish Councils under a single governing body, while each parish will retain its individual identity.

It is important that all Abington residents take part in the survey and hence have a say in the decision-making process. You can take part in the survey online at www.scambs.gov.uk/community-governance-reviews or complete a paper copy of the survey available from the Village Shop or the Village Institute. The survey closes at midnight on 18 December 2025.

River Project Update

Our river Granta is a local chalk stream that is important for wildlife and people. There are only about 200 chalk streams in the world and 85% of them are in England, indicating their importance. Last year Cambridge City Council put together the Greater Cambridge Stream Partnership, which plans to improve five local chalk streams and the Granta in Abington was one of the sites chosen. Money has been obtained and plans have been worked up and consulted on locally. There are two aspects to the project. The first is to carry out regular monitoring of the water in the river to check the quality of the water and test for any pollution of the water flowing through Abington. This will be carried out by a group of volunteers and is due to start soon. The next step is to improve the state of the river along the cricket and recreation fields with some work in the river and along the banks. This aspect of the plan is waiting for final approval from the Environment Agency and is scheduled to start next spring, when ground conditions are better.

Nancy Ockendon, Abington Naturewatch

Granta Medical Practices Update

Please find below details of when our surgeries will be open over the Christmas and New Year break. **Remember to order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time** so that you do not run out of your medication over the holidays. The table below shows you when you will be able to collect your prescriptions, depending on the date you place your order.

DATE	Opening hours	Repeat prescription schedule
December 2025		
Saturday 20	Open for pre-booked appointments only (Sawston)	Place order today, pick up Wednesday 24
Sunday 21	Closed	Place order today, pick up Wednesday 24
Monday 22	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Monday 29
Tuesday 23	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Tuesday 30
Wednesday 24 (Christmas Eve)	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Wednesday 31
Thursday 25 (Christmas Day)	Closed	Place order today, pick up Friday 2 January 2026
Friday 26 (Boxing Day)	Closed	Place order today, pick up Friday 2
Saturday 27	Open for pre-booked appointments only (Royston)	Place order today, pick up Friday 2
Sunday 28	Closed	Place order today, pick up Friday 2
Monday 29	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Friday 2
Tuesday 30	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Monday 5
Wednesday 31 (New Year's Eve)	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Tuesday 6
January 2026		
Thursday 1 (New Year's Day)	Closed	Place order today, pick up Wednesday 7
Friday 2	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Wednesday 7
Saturday 3	Open for pre-booked appointments only (Sawston)	Place order today, pick up Thursday 8
Sunday 4	Closed	Place order today, pick up Thursday 8

Don't forget, there are prescription collection points at Sawston, Linton and Shelford. Sign up today via cpicb.grantadispensing@nhs.net to pick up your medication at your convenience 24/7, including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

While we are closed, if you need urgent medical assistance please use the NHS 111 service. If you have an emergency that poses an immediate threat to life, ring 999.

Be prepared for common health problems by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home. Your local pharmacist can offer you advice and guidance on the best treatment for you. Pharmacists can now also prescribe some medications under the Pharmacy First service. Please go to <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/> for further information and eligibility criteria.

We wish you all a healthy and peaceful holiday season.

Abington History Group



The Abington History Group would like to thank all those who attended our 25th Anniversary Event on 18 October. To celebrate our 25 years, we launched our latest book, *Aspects of Abington History 5*. In this we dive back into some of our most successful projects now long out of print

– Colin Franklin's 'View from Deadman Hill' plus Second World War and LSA memories. We also discover what life was like in Abington in the late 19th century via articles on the Primary School and the memoirs of John Rickett. We celebrate the 70th anniversaries of the Tuesday Club and Magna Close and find out about the past owners of the Old House.



Copies are available for sale at £6. To obtain your copy please email abingtonhistorygroup1603@gmail.com for details or contact a member of the AHG – Tricia Cullimore, Derek Turnidge, David Milns, Richard Wells, Glynis Brookman.

The AHG thanks you for your continued support and wishes you all a Merry Christmas.

Tricia Cullimore, AHG Chair

Photo: Derek Turnidge, the longest-serving member of the AHG, cutting the anniversary cake.

Festive Meal at The Apiary, Granta Park



Tuesday 16 December 6.00–8.00pm

Last chance to apply for a free ticket!

The Ballot Box will be opened on 30 November.

A free taxi service is available.

Lucky winners will be notified at the beginning of December.

Application forms available in the Shop/Institute or email broadhurstmarilyn@gmail.com

News from Love Abington



A Boost to the Free School Meals Scheme

The government's free school meals scheme is a wonderful help to families on low incomes, covering the cost of each child's lunch during term time. However, out of term this support is no longer there and families find it difficult to cope with the additional expense. Would you like to help local families facing this difficulty? If you are interested in finding out how you can help, please email loveabington1@gmail.com.

Save the date! Love Abington Spring Event: The Repair Café, Saturday 7 March 10.00am–1.00pm at the Village Institute.

Have you wanted to appear on BBC's *The Repair Shop* but never had an opportunity? Do not fear – let us bring the Repair Shop to you with some wonderful volunteer repairers. We have decided to run another **Repair Café** with the support of the **Cambridge Carbon Footprint association**. We hope to offer repair services for a wide range of household articles, from broken electrical goods, watches and clocks, picture frames and wobbly legs on (transportable) chairs to broken jewellery. It will be the beginning of the growing season so please think about booking a slot for sharpening your garden tools. There will be more details in the new year.

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year from all the volunteers at Love Abington.

FRIENDS OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
HILDERSHAM INVITE YOU TO JOIN THEM

FREE ENTRY

Christmas

CRAFT MARKET

MUSIC, FOOD & GIFTS

LOCAL CRAFT STALLS, MULLED WINE AND MINCE PIES, LIVE MUSIC, RAFFLE, CRAFTS FOR CHILDREN AND PLENTY OF FESTIVE CHEER!

STALLS INCLUDE – LOCAL HOME MADE CRAFTS, PRODUCE, CARDS AND CHOCOLATES, FLOURISH PRODUCE, CAMBRIDGE MAKERS, JEWELLERY, LOCAL ARTISTS, INNERLATHER BEAUTY AND MORE.

COME ALONG – FIND A FEW SPECIAL GIFTS, ENJOY THE ATMOSPHERE, AND CELEBRATE THE START OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON!

FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER
5PM – 8 PM

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
HILDERSHAM, CB21 6BU

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT – REVD HANNAH THRELFALL –
REVTHRELFALL24@OUTLOOK.COM

please join us for

WALKING CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Tuesday 23rd December
4pm

Starting at Little Abington church and walking up to the top of the High Street!

Join us, when and where you can, in the procession as We follow the star of Bethlehem – on a tractor! Ted and Tom the two miniature donkeys and the musical tuk-tuk!

Let's spread joy to all!

FOR MORE INFORMATION – REVD HANNAH THRELFALL – REVTHRELFALL@OUTLOOK.COM

November Church Services

(other than the Abingtons and Hildersham)

DATE	9.30am	11.00am	Services pm
December 7		United Communion <i>Balsham</i>	
December 14	Communion <i>West Wickham</i> Morning Worship <i>West Wratting</i>		4.00pm Christingle Service Taizé Service <i>Weston Colville</i>
December 21	Communion <i>West Wickham</i> <i>Weston Colville</i>	Carol Service <i>West Wratting</i>	4.00pm Carol Service <i>Balsham</i>
December 24 Christmas Eve			Carol services 4.00pm <i>West Wratting</i> 4.00pm <i>Weston Colville</i> 6.00pm <i>West Wickham</i> Midnight Mass 11.30pm <i>Balsham</i>
December 25 Christmas Day	Communion <i>West Wickham</i> <i>West Wratting</i>	Morning Worship <i>Balsham</i>	
December 28		United Communion <i>Balsham</i>	

Regular midweek services: Morning Prayer, 8.45am, every Friday Weston Colville

Masses at Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church

135 High Street, Sawston CB22 3HJ, www.ololsawston.org.uk

Monday, Wednesday*–Saturday	9.30am Holy Mass
Tuesday	7.00pm Holy Mass
Sunday	8.45am and 11.15am Holy Mass
*Weds 24 December (Christmas Eve)	6.00pm and 9.00pm Holy Mass
Thurs 25 December (Christmas Day)	10.00am and 11.30am Holy Mass

News from Granta Park

Get ready for a double dose of festive cheer at Granta Park this December! Join us on Wednesday 10 December for our Christmas Market, open from 11.30am to 2.30pm in the cosy Christmas tipi next to The Clubhouse. Browse a fantastic range of local traders and then treat yourself to lunch from The Clubhouse's brand-new festive menu. The celebrations continue the next day with our Festive Fun Run on Thursday 11 December, 11.45am–1.00pm, raising money for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. Enjoy a lively warm-up led by Nuffield Health, then walk, jog or run the 3km loop and finish with festive treats — all included in your £5 entry fee, with every penny going to EAAA. Come along, get active, shop local and spread some Christmas cheer with your Granta Park community! Buy tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/granta-park-festive-fun-run-2025-in-aid-of-east-anglian-air-ambulance-tickets-1692208253439?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email admin@grantapark.co.uk.

Church Services for December 2025

DATE	Gt Abington 	Lt Abington 	Hildersham 	Readings
December 7	11.00am United Service at Balsham			Isaiah 11.1–10 Matthew 3.1-12
December 14	11.00am Communion		11.00am Café Church	Isaiah 35.1–10 Matthew 11.2–11
December 21	6.30pm Carol Service		3.00pm Carol Service	Isaiah 7.10–16 Matthew 1.18–end (see service sheets for Carol Services)
December 24		10.30am Crib service 11.30pm Midnight Mass		Isaiah 52.7–10 John 1.1–14 (Midnight Mass)
December 25	11.00am Morning Worship		9.30am Communion	Isaiah 9.2–7 Luke 2.1–20
December 28	11.00am United Service at Balsham			

Regular midweek services: Silent Space followed by Compline, 7.00pm, every Tuesday at Hildersham

Creative Church: 9.30am, Sunday 21 December, Abington Institute

Church Flower Rota

	Gt Abington	Lt Abington	Hildersham
December 7 and 14	Advent – no flowers		
December 21 and 28	Anne Hall and Patsy Randall (all help appreciated)	Christmas (all help please)	
December 28	Anne Hall and Patsy Randall (all help appreciated)	Mrs Broadhurst	Carols (all help please)

Churchwardens

Great and Little Abington	Graham Ross	36 Brinkman Road, Linton	07852 528 693
Hildersham	Keith Day	Fourwinds, Linton Road, Hildersham	891 527

Assistant Churchwardens

Great Abington	Patsy Randall	77 High Street, Great Abington	07765 345 714
Little Abington	Mary Miles	36 Church Lane, Little Abington	891 083
	Marilyn Broadhurst	34 West Field, Little Abington	893 214