

**THIS
MONTH**

**“The Future of
St Maurice’s”**

**“Knowing Me,
Knowing You”
with David
Griggs**

**“Ellingham in
the News:
Murder at
Coldrife Farm”**

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ELLINGHAM NEWSLETTER

£ 3 . 5 0 P E R A N N U M



Happy Easter Everyone!

As we continue to grow the Newsletter, we are very interested in receiving contributions from all parishioners and also advertisers who would like to play a part in our new look.

We would also love to know how you feel about the Newsletter.

Write to us, let us know what you think.

Ellinghamviews@gmail.com.

40p per copy

Delivered free to all parishioners, thanks to a grant from Ellingham Community Trust www.ellinghamcommunitytrust.org



“I have loved being part of the Easter Celebration in our Churches since my arrival in 2019 and this year there will be for Lynne and I a powerful mixture of emotions”.

Canon Tony
Macpherson

Canontonymac
@gmail.com

Alleluia Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!

From the Evening Vigil on the 4th April and for the next 50 days this ancient cry - the Easter Acclamation will be part of the Liturgy in the Churches of the West - the Orthodox are a week behind us.

This is my last Easter in this Benefice before my retirement in June and it contrasts sharply with my first Easter in 2020. We celebrated Easter in lockdown and there was a short vigil in the Vicarage Garden - it can still be found here <https://youtu.be/wCRYVZ4fxxM?si=YjBZWpEMqF3Dxavk>

I have loved being part of the Easter Celebration in our Churches since my arrival in 2019 and this year there will be for Lynne and I a powerful mixture of emotions.

Above all whether in the quiet of 2020 or in our normal years of celebration we mark Christ's Victory over Death and the promise of new life for us all.

As I write this Putin's attacks on Ukraine continue and Iran and the Middle East show us the tragic and chaotic consequences of war - never more have we needed the Christian message of the victor of light over darkness.

Please join us for our Celebrations of Easter in any of our Churches and celebrate with us and to pray for a peaceful world modelled on the Peace of the Risen Christ

Tony
Canon Tony Macpherson
Vicar Beadnell, Ellingham and North Sunderland

Sunday Rota: April

	Reader (R)	Sidesman (S)
30th March	Monday of Holy Week Service at 6pm	
3rd April	Good Friday Stations of the cross 10am	
5th April	Easter Day	White
	Mr N Mundy (R)	Mrs D Lightfoot (S)
12th April	Easter 2	White
	Mrs A Laidler (R)	Miss E Duncan (S)
19th April	Easter 3	White
	Miss E Duncan (R)	Mrs A Laidler (S)
26th April	Easter 4	White
	Morning Worship	

Good Friday Service

Stations of the Cross: Starting at 10am

On Good Friday we meet at the Lytch gate at church (unless it is raining when we meet in church) and walk with readings and hymns up the path and round the church finishing in church as we remember Christ's journey to the Cross.

We then have hot cross buns in church before decorating the church for Easter.

We shall be decorating the church for Easter after the Stations of the Cross service on Good Friday – do come and help – it is an occasion we can enjoy working on something together as a community.

Bring secateurs, your mug and a flask.

Gifts of flowers and greenery can be left in the buckets of water in the porch the day before (Thurs). We shall be decorating from approximately 10.30am.

The Future of Ellingham St Maurice's Church

Summary of Meeting 26th February 2026.

All parishioners of Ellingham Parish received an invitation requesting their perspectives on the future of St Maurice's. Canon Tony delivered a presentation outlining the challenges anticipated by the church in the coming year and beyond, noting that the median age of attendees now exceeds 80 years. Regular attendance has declined, currently totalling seven individuals, with even fewer participating in the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Attendance increases during festivals and special occasions, such as weddings, which offers some encouragement. Recent improvements to the church include the installation of under-pew heating, refurbishment of the porch, and plastering work. The church gratefully acknowledges the financial support provided by the Ellingham Community Trust.

I attended this meeting as both a practising Christian and a former Church Warden of a parish within the same Deanery. My involvement with St Maurice's stems from my experience as a volunteer at the local Ellingham village school. I was interested to observe the turnout, aside from the regular congregation, given the challenges typical of rural churches. I learned that a group of non-churchgoers maintains St Maurice's Churchyard. In total, approximately 24 individuals were present, which was quite impressive. Canon Tony engaged the group by first asking the congregation about their perspectives on the church's future; two scenarios were discussed—reducing services to once a month or transitioning St Maurice's into a festival church. Subsequently, others contributed to the discussion. Canon Tony then requested a show of hands from those wishing for Ellingham St Maurice's to remain an active church in the future, and the support was unanimous. The outcome was encouraging, reflecting strong community interest in sustaining the local church. He distributed his contact card and invited attendees to reach out if they wished to become supporters, suggesting periodic meetings to consider ways to further support the church moving forward.

Thank you to the ladies who provided refreshments. I concluded the meeting with a strong sense of optimism regarding the future of rural churches. Congratulations to St Maurice's and its parishioners on a job well done.

Brenda Frier

Annual Parish Meeting

To be held at 7pm on 23rd April

In Ellingham Village Hall

This is your chance to have a say in what happens in your church

It seems probable that there was a church at Ellingham before the Norman Conquest. There certainly was one on the present site in the life time of Nicholas de Grenville, Baron of Ellingham, in the reign of Henry I,. Our present church was first built in 1862, during the incumbency of Rev. Charles Thorp.



Harry Lancaster plants the 2000 yew tree



The church circa 1870



View from footpath from Packhorse Bridge 1980



Repairs to the tower 2004



ELLINGHAM COMMUNITY TRUST MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD 5 MARCH 2026 AT BROCKDAM

Attendees: John Thompson (JT) (in the Chair) (vice Chair), George Unwin (GU), Brenda Frier (BF) (Trustees) Louis Fell (Treasurer), Virginia Mayes-Wright (VMW) (Clerk).

1) **Apologies:** David Metcalfe (DM) (chair), Graham Edmondson (GE), Judy Glover (JG) (Trustees)
2) The Trustees reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting held on 5th February 2026.

3) Treasures Report.

LF presented the Treasurer's Report. The Trustees reviewed the accounts. LF presented a cashflow prediction for the next six years, noting that the lowest point of the Trust's reserves will be later in this year. LF reopened the discussion about putting some of the Trust's money into an investment account. The Trustees discussed this and agreed. **ACTION : LF to set up an investment account.**

4) Applications/Review of Schemes

Grants/Applications In Progress

Village Hall Application – the Trustees agreed to review this at the April meeting.

Defib Pads – GU noted that these had been purchased and installed.

School Laptops – BF reported that the laptops have been purchased.

Photographic Archive – This is ongoing with GE providing a report.

St Maurice's Church – No further update.

Solid Fuel Scheme – LF discussed the scheme and suppliers available in the area. Decision made to create a list for the wood suppliers in order to solve the communication issues. The Trustees discussed timings for the schemes suggested that maintaining the 2025 timings would be suitable.

31st May for a return. **ACTION : Clerk to put poster into Parish Magazine to alert parishioners to the upcoming scheme.**

ACTION : Clerk to meet with BF to provide details for mailing.

Green Scheme – GU presented a new application for discussion. The Trustees agreed the application.

ACTION : Clerk to email the Green Scheme applicant.

TESS – Clerk noted that there was a new TESS application. **ACTION : Clerk to email the TESS application to Trustees.**

5) Welcome Pack for Residents

Clerk noted progress and awaiting pdf from the printers. **ACTION : Clerk to email pdf to Trustees for checking.**

6) Communication

The Clerk suggested a communication to alert parishioners to the Solid Fuel Scheme. The Trustees agreed and suggested adding information into the Parish Magazine. **ACTION : Clerk to write post for website and Parish Magazine.**

7) AOB.

The Trustees raised concerns about non-resident applications. Trustees agreed to personally verify new applicants. **ACTION : Clerk to add to active scheme forms/website request for proof of residency.**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETINGS:- 2nd April 2026, 7th May 2026, 4th June 2026, 2nd July 2026, 6th August 2026, 3rd September 2026, 1st October 2026, 5th November 2026, 3rd December 2026. All at Ellingham Village Hall.

Ellingham Community Trust

Solid Fuel Scheme 2026



The Trust's Solid Fuel Scheme for 2026 will be launched in April.

If your primary residence is within the Parish of Ellingham you can apply to Ellingham Community Trust for a voucher for solid Fuel.

If you do not have an open fire or log burner it is still worth taking advantage of this offer. Ellingham Community Trust buys in bulk, the more we can buy, the better value achievable. It is acceptable to sell the fuel (please ask a Trustee for contacts of people who would buy) or to pass on as a gift.

Alternatively, you can request to receive a cash sum from the Trust.

To receive notification of the launch of the Solid Fuel Scheme, contact the Clerk to be added to the mailing list or sign up to receive updates from the website. To apply, simply complete the application form available in April at www.ellinghamcommunitytrust.org by the deadline on the form and either post or email it to ellinghamcommunitytrust@gmail.com or post to Virginia Mayes-Wright, 1, Chathill Farm Cottages, Chathill, NE67 5DE by 31st May 2026.

Households submitting after this deadline will only be eligible for the £100 cash payment option. If you submit an application and do not receive confirmation of this order by phone or email, it is your responsibility to get in touch with Ellingham Community Trust.

Conditions

Only one application per Household will be accepted.

ECT accepts no responsibility for use or misuse of this fuel and makes no guarantee about its performance.

Ellingham Community Trust (ECT) is committed to the protection of your privacy. We will only use the personal information that we collect from you in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. ECT will only use your personal information to process and administer the Solid Fuel Scheme. Your information is held securely during this process and is deleted immediately afterwards. We do not transfer your personal information to any third party. For further information on GDPR, please visit www.ico.org.uk

The Newsletter is here to be a communication tool for every Parishioner.

If you would like to express a view, on anything that is happening in our around the Parish, or anything related to the Newsletter, please send us your views.

Email to:

EllinghamViews@gmail.com

Thank You!

On behalf of the PCC I wish most warmly to thank the good folks in the Gardening Volunteers who have so kindly cleared the Church yard of brambles and weeds.

It has been a huge and daunting task which the Team has tackled with commendable enthusiasm and have done an amazing job .

We are so grateful as I am sure will be all those who visit the Church yard.

NM, Churchwarden



Magic in the Movies

We really enjoy reading all the information & articles in the newsletter.

Having just read about the films shot in Northumberland for the big screen.

You may be interested to know about the film "47 Ronin" made in 2013, starring Keanu Reeves. We lived and worked on the Isle of Skye for 14 years & saw some of this film being made.

One of the scenes was shot at Neist Point, the furthest point on the west coast of the Island. A group of men mount up on their horses and ride off through the heather clad rough countryside. The next scene they are thundering over the sands with Bamburgh castle in front of them.

This is some going for a horse as it used to take us 7 hours of driving, plus a few hours for breaks to get here for our holidays!!!

David & Nicky, Doxford.

The Newsletter

I wish to say how much my family and I value receiving the Newsletter.

The format and graphics are excellent as is the overall quality of the publication.

We are extremely fortunate as a community to have the Newsletter which provides such helpful information on the various activities within the Parish of Ellingham. It is also an important source of reference to the work of the Parish Council, Ellingham Community Trust (ECT), EVHT and St Maurices Church .

The "Knowing Me Knowing You" feature is a brilliant addition with thoughts and lifetime experiences of those local people being interviewed -I'm sure both ABBA and Alan Partridge would approve!

Well done Eileen and Graham along with the Editorial Team, and all those who contribute to this excellent publication and thanks to ECT for their generous funding.

Neil Mundy

Falldon and the Greys

Thanks for the very interesting article on the Greys and Falldon.

Some years ago a friend who knows that I'm a bird watcher, gave me an old book, which I treasure, "The Charm of Birds", by Grey of Falldon. It was published in 1927. The Viscount writes beautifully and knowledgeably of the birds he has observed at the several properties he has lived at, but principally at Falldon.

His love of and connection with nature must indeed have been such a solace following his personal tragedy, and also as relief from busy government life.

Regards,
Judy Glover

Carpe Vitam Yoga

Yoga classes are running in

Ellingham Village Hall

Yoga is for everyone and we would love to welcome you to our

Thursday morning session at 9:30

Tuesday evening 6-7pm

'Seize your Life' and come and join us in

Ellingham Village Hall

Come with a mat or I have some to buy

Contact Karen on: 07884715733

W:CarpeVitamYoga.uk

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REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT ELLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

Come and join one of the regular activities, exercise classes or craft sessions at the hall. Everyone is welcome. Check latest details on the website: ellinghamvillagehall.com

Book the hall for your own party, business meeting or family event through the website. Parishioners receive a 50% discount on hall hire charges.

If you are not already on our 'What's On' email list then send a message to: admin@ellinghamvillagehall.com



TABLE TENNIS

Mondays 4 - 6pm

Great exercise and competitive fun with no age limit.

Contact:
Gus Macleod on 07896 595082



KNIT 'N' STITCH

First Tuesday of the month
1.30 - 3.30pm

Enjoy an afternoon in good company on wide range of creative projects, share tips, enjoy some cake and a chat. No need to book - just turn up.

admin@ellinghamvillagehall.com or phone: 07938 828699



ART CLASS

Fourth Tuesday of the month
1.30 - 4.30pm

No experience or talent required
- just come and have a go.

Contact: Ian Stephenson on
07740 638733



YOGA

Tuesday evenings 6 - 7pm or
Thursdays 9.30 - 11am.

Yoga with Carpe Vitam.
A great all rounder.

Contact:
Karen Mundy on 07884 715733



TAI CHI

Wednesdays 6 -7pm

Everyone, including beginners,
welcome.

Occasional changes to timetable
so please contact:
Enid Scott on 07951 438561



QUIZ NIGHTS

Third Thursday of the month
(except June, July & August)
7.30 - 10pm

Bring your friends, drinks and
snacks. Just turn up.

Everyone welcome.

Go wild this April!



Northumberland
Wildlife Trust

With events from Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Wagtastic Easter meetup

Fri 3 Apr | 10:00 - 12:00
Weetslade Country Park NE23 7LZ
£3 suggested donation

Enjoy fresh air, fun and laughter especially for dog walkers and their four-legged friends.

Easter egg trail

Fri 3 - Mon 6 Apr | 10:00 - 15:00
Northumberlandia NE23 8AU
£3 per child

Our popular Easter egg trail returns! Download a map to find the hidden numbered eggs!

Spring photo trail

Fri 3 - Sun 19 Apr | 10:00 - 15:00
Hauxley Nature Reserve NE65 0JR
Free, donations welcome

Join us for springtime family fun at Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre.

Out in nature

Wed 8 Apr | 11:00 - 15:00
Northumberlandia NE23 8AU
Free

Follow our rainbow trail to learn about the fabulous diversity in the natural world, enjoying stalls and activities along the way!

Hedgehog Walk

Fri 10 Apr | 11:00 - 12:00
Weetslade Country Park NE23 7LZ
Free, donations welcome

Join us for a gentle walk, part of the Hedgehog Walk fundraising challenge, for young nature explorers.

Easter nature celebration

Sat 11 Apr | 10:30 - 15:30
St Nicholas Park, Gosforth NE3 3XT
Free

Celebrate the arrival of spring with a fun-filled family day at our St Nicholas Park nature reserve.

Till death do us part: the love-life of the bullfinch

Wed 15 Apr | 19:00 - 20:00
Hauxley Nature Reserve NE65 0JR
Free, donations welcome

Chris Wright, local bird expert, invites you to join him as he gives a fascinating illustrated talk all about these incredible birds.

Family fun with Northern Lights Northumberland

Wed 15 Apr | 10:00 - 11:00
Northumberlandia NE23 8AU
Free

Join NWT and Northern Lights Northumberland for outdoor family fun for children and families with disabilities and additional needs.

Hedgehog Walk

Thu 16 Apr | 11:00 - 12:00
Northumberlandia NE23 8AU
Free, donations welcome

Join us for a gentle walk, part of the Hedgehog Walk fundraising challenge, for young nature explorers.

Bat walk

Sat 25 Apr | 20:30 - 21:30
Valley Park, Cramlington NE23 6NL
Free

Join us for an evening walk, learn all about about bats and use detectors to search for them in the local area.



For full event listings and to book, visit nwt.org.uk/events

IMAGE © TOM MARSHALL


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ELLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL TRUST FEBRUARY MANAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES



Attendees G

Macleod, E Duncan, G Duncan, C Stevenson, Jayne Dobson and R McKibbin.

Apologies: G Edmondson

Conflicts of interest

3. None reported.

Approval of Minutes

4. The minutes of the 13 January 2026 were approved and signed by GM.

Matters arising

5. RM will continue to produce a summarised set of minutes for publication on the website and also in the Ellingham Parish magazine.

Treasurers report

7. The fundraising benchmark percentage for EVH's normal annual running costs is showing a healthy 41% for the first quarter of our financial year, which started on 1 November 2025. Insurance payments to date are similar to the equivalent 2024/25 figures.

8. Income and outgoing totals to 31 January 2026 were as follows (previous month in brackets):

Room hire – £240.00 (£106.75).

Fund raising – £425.70 (£1479.00).

Other income – Interest – £48.46 (£15.37).

Expenditure - £1237.75 (£411.19). Includes costs of fund raising (£107.46), maintenance (£166.15), Insurance (£847.77) and Equipment (£112.80).

Funding update

9. We are running out of time to obtain the top up sum of 15% from the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund as we have yet to reach 85% of the overall construction cost total for the EVH extension.

10. GM has sent an appeal letter for additional funds to the Lord Crewe and Catherine Cookson trusts.

11. The roller banner will be updated at the next Coffee Morning to show additional funds of £7500 obtained since it was first erected.

Notice board

12. No further progress. It was agreed that this item would be placed on hold until the EVH extension was fully funded.

Policy updates

13. AH to add the 'to be reviewed' date to the policies published on the EVH website.

14. Safeguarding submission date to be noted as February 2026 with a review date of February

2027. ED informed the meeting that EVH committee members can attend the Bellview training day on safeguarding to be held on 23 April 2026 (contact Joanne or Katie on 01668 219220).

15. RM to forward completed Health & Safety and Complaints policies to A Hunt for publication on the EVH website.

16. The EVH website and EVH records can show that the Environmental and Equal Opportunities statements were reviewed in February 2026.

17. The Financial and Conflict of Interest documents are undated as they are unchanged.

18. The Hire Agreement needs to ensure that the storage of flammable equipment is addressed and that storage generally by hirers requires permission. There also needs to be a designated person to whom damage is reported.

19. GM will review the Access Statement.

Hallmark II

20. The Hallmark II checklist was discussed.

21. A risk assessment is required from each of the regular groups using the hall. GM has produced the risk assessment for the table tennis club.

22. A maintenance record is required which should include the date and nature of the inspection and any associated certificates obtained.

23. IS has agreed to create a maintenance schedule based on the H & S policy.

24. EVH should have an accident book (located near the first aid box). JR has agreed to administer this document and the associated forms as part of her first aid checks.

25. The CAN assessment team (Tracy and Ron) will make an informal visit on 30 March 2026 to assess the current 'state of play' regarding our preparation for the Hallmark II submission. GM and CS will attend.

Hall checks and cleaning requirements

26. For the purpose of general duties and monthly checks the following rota for 2026 was updated and agreed: March – AH, April – GM, May – IS and June - JD

AOB

27. Village Hall week runs from 18 to 22 March 2026. The CAN event is being held at Stannington Village Hall on 18 March 2026 starting at 12.00 noon. The two representatives from EVH will be GD and JR.

28. Equipment in the store room must be kept clear of the router otherwise the Wi-Fi signal will be disrupted.

29. The link for accessing the password for the Heatmiser heating monitor will be issued by CS.

30. The 'Motion Picture Survey' held at the Coffee Morning revealed equal support for the showing of 'recent' and 'older' films. There was strong support for heritage films, specifically those showing archive footage relevant to Northumberland and the North East.

EVHT management meeting ended at 10.33 am

ELLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL TRUST

EVH sub-group meeting FEBRUARY MINUTES



Attendees

G Macleod (T), C Stevenson (T), G Duncan (T), E Duncan (T), Jayne Dobson (T), R McKibbin,(T), A Hunt (V), J Rose (V) and I Stephenson (V) Apologies: G Edmondson

Bookings

There have been no major bookings since the previous meeting.

JD agreed to follow up on a potential wedding booking for the hall.

AH made contact with Carnaby's to discuss how EVH could link various events in the hall with food and catering provided by them as a preferred supplier. Carnaby's have agreed to provide professional photos which can be added to our promotional package for weddings. There is also the possibility that some EVH events can be 'tastefully' promoted in Carnaby's.

Events

Simply Smallholdings have offered an all-day course on stained glass making for £140/person. EVH will offer the hall at £15/hour for this event (no catering is required)

Tai Chi is to be a regular Wednesday evening event and should be added to the calendar. RMcK to photograph a session so that the EVH website can be updated.

Coffee mornings to be held on 14 February, 14 March, 4 April 2026 (Easter) and 9 May to coincide with the Packhorse Leek Club plant sale.

Quiz nights: 3rd Thursday in the month until May 2026.

Salmon City Blues Band will play at the hall on 14 February 2026. A supporting band (Tide Song) will play from 7.30pm with SCBB playing from 8.30pm to late. First & Last Brewery will provide cask beer and pump on sale or return. Tickets £10/person – food to be provided for the band only. The bar will be open from 7.30pm.

First & Last will give a talk on 6 March 2026 about the brewery with a tasting session included. £5/ticket.

Mama Mia sing-along will be hosted on 13 March 2026 with doors open at 6.30pm and movie at 7.00pm. £5/ticket and the bar will be open.

Felted Easter egg drop-in crafting session on 17 March 2026 (1.30pm to 4.00pm). £5 towards materials.

EVH BBQ: Proposed date 11 July 2026 (music by Lee & Tom).

Leek Show: 12 September 2026, a Macmillan charity event.

Christmas Fair: 15 November 2026 - £40/table.

Wreath making run by Vanessa Wellock on 28 Nov 2026 (morning and afternoon sessions). £32pp.

Landscaping

Christmas lights: The likely cost of providing waterproof cabling running underground from the large trees to the hall is approximately £500. It was agreed that this item would be placed on hold until the EVH extension was fully funded.

AOB: None.

Date of next meetings: 10 March 2026 at 09.00 (thereafter the 2nd Tuesday of each month) GM will be absent, CS will chair the meeting.



In Case You Missed It

The First and Last Brewery gave a talk at the Village Hall on 6 March 2026 about the brewery -with a tasting session included! (pictures by Anne Whitely)



Salmon City Blues Band, played the Village Hall on Saturday Feb 14th

David Griggs

When David and his wife Alison

moved north in the early 1970s, they were looking for something different.

What they found was something much deeper: a close-knit rural community, rich in character and tradition.

More than fifty years on, David reflects—in his own words—on how that village has changed.

When did you and Alison first move to Ellingham David?

“We first came to the village in 1974, having

If you'd be willing to speak as a villager, new or established, and allow us to get to know you a little better, then please let us know by dropping us an email at Ellinghamviews@gmail.com

Knowing Me,
Knowing You
It's the best I can do.



moved up from Cambridge. We were living on a housing estate, just outside Cambridge, and on the 6th of January 1973 we moved up. We were fortunate enough to be able to rent a cottage behind the Mason's Arms at Brownieside. We'd been looking for a house up here for several months and couldn't find anything. But, to cut a long story short, we were offered a plot of land in the village here and had a bungalow built, so we actually moved into the village in October 1974. We built on what was called "Golden Close"—well, when we talk about Golden Close, that was the original name of the field. According to John Maxwell, the farmer at the time, it was called that because it was always full of buttercups... and we still have masses of creeping buttercups. It was where the cattle used to walk down to the burn to drink—a great, plodgy, mud-

dy mess. When it was fenced off, for us, a trough had to be put in for them nearer the farm.

Although he'd lost that bit of land, and the drinking water for the cattle, he was very, very good to us was John Maxwell.

What brought you up here from Cambridge?

“A job! Alison and I had both been teaching at the College of Arts and Technology in Cambridge. She was teaching catering and hotel management, and I was teaching PE. But we got to a stage where we'd really had enough of living in a housing estate just outside Cambridge. We needed a change. My job was, I thought, dead-end—it wasn't going to change for many years. Having had a year on a course in Leeds, we thought it would be very nice to move north.

What we didn't realise was that we were going to move so far north. I'd been looking at the Times Educational Supplement for jobs in further and higher education, and a job came up at what I called 'Alnwick' College—Alison said, 'No, it's Annwick!' So I applied for the job, and I found that it was a College of Education—teacher training. At that time, half of the castle was let by the Duke to Northumberland County Council for the purposes of a College of Education. I'd only been there about 18 months when Margaret Thatcher announced the closure of a number of smaller colleges of education. So I had to think, what am I going to do? I was lucky enough to get on a course at Newcastle University in middle and primary education and I eventually I found a job as headteacher at Cornhill School. I was there for 11 years. It was a massive change—having been teaching adults, suddenly teaching seven- to nine-year-olds."

What was the village like when you first arrived?

"I just remember particularly the warmth and welcome of people. People like John and Joan Maxwell, Billy and Nora Pringle, to name a few. The Home Farm was in full swing—very, very different then. I think they had three tractor drivers and a shepherd. Eileen Duncan's father, of course,

—he was one of the characters.

John Smith owned the pub then. He had previously owned a café at Brownieside, which burnt down just before we came up here. It's funny, I always regret that I never met Mr. Snowden, a previous tenant of the Pack Horse, who apparently was a bone setter. According to people, he was the publican and did this as a sideline, in the room next to the bar. I did hear the story—whether it's true or not—that he used to practise on rabbits, pulling joints out and putting them back together... but whether that's fantasy or fact, I really couldn't tell you."

And you then became very involved in the community...

"Yes, first of all, it was the church—I've been involved with that for over 50 years.

I'm not sure when I started on the Parish Council, but I've certainly clocked up about 40 years there, and a similar number on the village hall committee. When we came up, as far as I can remember, almost everybody was involved in some way or another.

The church used to have its annual garden fête, and there were three gardens involved—the Vicarage, Brockdam, and Preston Tower. On an annual basis, it was held at one or the other. The day before the fête, John Maxwell would send a

tractor and trailer to move all the heavy wooden tables and benches from the village hall up to wherever the fête was being held. So there was a real community effort.” Looking back, on my time with the Parish Council, it was significant that our Parish Council was the only one which supported the Wandylaw wind farm project. All other councils around ours objected. Where would we be without it?”

How has the village changed over the time you have lived here?

“The main village street, when we first came, was beautifully maintained. There were lawns in front of the council houses, rose beds, flower borders.— maintained by the council For many years, we entered the ‘best-kept village’ competition. We never won it, because we didn’t go over the top, but everybody took an interest. When we came up, almost everybody would have been involved.”

You have built an amazing collection of photographs of the village, and recordings of people. How did your recording and photo project begin?

“I really don’t know what sparked me into taking my tape recorder to all these people—about 20-odd people—back in the 1980s. Many of those people were then in their 80s and 90s, so it’s fascinat-

ing to have memories of people talking about the late 1890s. I think possibly what prompted me was that I had read a book called “Akenfield” by Ronald Blythe. It was a collection of memories from people living in a Suffolk village. I realised that if you didn’t record them, a lot of these memories would be lost.”

What do you hope for the collection going forward?

“My hope is that somebody else would like to take it on and keep it up to date. It’s not about nostalgia—it’s about change. Hence the title, ‘**The Changing Face of a Rural Parish**’”.

It’s not hanging on to what it was—it changes over the years. That’s what’s really interesting.”



David’s words capture something simple but powerful: villages don’t stand still. They evolve, just as the people within them do.

And thanks to David’s recordings, and photographs, that evolution hasn’t been lost—it’s been preserved, in the voices of Old Ellingham. Beginning next month, we will be featuring transcripts of some of David’s interviews with villagers of the past.

When you mix children and religion...

The following are extracts from religious exam papers...

“In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, God got tired of creating the world, so He took the Sabbath off.”

“Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of Ark because Noah built an ark. The animals came on in pears”.

“The Jews are a proud people and throughout history they’ve had trouble with unsympathetic genitals”.

“The Seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not admit adultery.”

“Moses died before he ever reached Canada.”

“Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.”

Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says do unto others before they do one to you.”

“It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance”.

Murder at Coldrife

This month we venture back to 1790, and a tragic event at Coldrife

Coldrife Farm, for the past 2 generations farmed by the Fife family, stands 2 miles to the north of Ellingham. Today, there's little to disturb the peace. The fields stretch out as they always have, the wind moves across the land, and the road carries only the occasional passer-by. It's the sort of place where nothing much seems to happen. But in February of 1790, something did. And for those who lived here then, it would have been impossible to forget.

A Dark Night in February 1790

George Gibson lived at Coldrife. He was a married man, a farmer, and by all accounts settled in his life. His days would have followed a familiar rhythm—early mornings, animals to tend, land to work. It was a hard life, but a steady one. In winter especially, the work never stopped; frost in the ground and bitter winds only made the routine more demanding.

A few miles away, at Elford, lived Thomas Watson. He was younger, unmarried, and lived with his father. Like Gibson, he was part of the same small rural world. They shared the same roads, the same markets, and the same circle of people. They may well have stood side by side at market in Alwick, or shared a drink at the end of a long day.



At one time, the two men were more than just neighbours—they were close friends. Very close friends indeed, by all accounts. The sort of friendship built over years, through shared work, shared hardships, and the quiet understanding that comes from living the same life.

That is what makes what followed so difficult to understand, because, at some point, something changed between them.

We don't know exactly when or how. The records are silent on that. But we are told that Watson came to believe that Gibson had accused him of something deeply serious—what was then called “unnatural crimes.” In the 1700s, such an accusation could destroy a man. It could ruin his reputation, isolate him from his neighbours, and even lead to prosecution.



Whether Gibson truly said anything, or whether it was rumour or misunder-

standing, we cannot say. But for Watson, it seems to have become all-consuming. In a small community, there was no escaping such a thing. Words travelled quickly and lingered. A glance, a whisper, a change in tone—any of these could feed suspicion. And whatever Watson heard—or thought he heard—took root in his mind.

In the days before the killing, something hardened in him.

Watson travelled to Alnwick and bought a pistol, along with powder and shot. It was a deliberate act. This was no sudden outburst of anger. He was preparing for his worst.

On the night of 19th February, 1790, he went out and waited along a route where he expected Gibson to pass. He had been drinking—perhaps to steady himself, perhaps to fuel his anger. Armed and ready, he lay in wait in the dark. But Gibson never came.

It must have been a long and empty night. Cold, silent, and filled with whatever thoughts had driven him there. The kind of cold that settles into your bones, where every sound seems louder, and every minute stretches. At that point, he could have turned back. The chance had gone. But he did not.

Murder in the Morning

The following morning, Watson went directly to Coldrife Farm. It is not difficult to imagine the scene. A cold February morning, the farm just beginning its day. Smoke perhaps rising from the chimney, animals stirring, the ordinary sounds of work beginning. George Gibson would have been going about his usual routine, unaware that anything was wrong. Watson found him there. We do not know if

words were exchanged. Perhaps there was an argument. Perhaps there was only a brief moment of recognition. What we do know is that Watson raised the pistol and fired. The shot struck Gibson through the heart. He died within minutes.

News of the killing would have spread quickly through the parish. In a place like this, everyone would have known both men. The shock would have been immediate. People would have spoken of little else for days—at the church, on the road, in the fields—trying to make sense of what had happened.

This was not a distant crime. It had happened at a familiar farm, between people who were part of the same community.



Watson was soon arrested and taken to Newcastle to await trial and the case was heard at the Newcastle assizes.

Sentenced to Death

Murder was treated with severity, and the process was often swift.

Watson's defence argued that he had not been in his right mind—that he had

been temporarily insane. But the court was not persuaded. The planning—the journey to buy the pistol, the attempted ambush, the decision to go to Coldrife the next morning—all pointed to something deliberate. He was found guilty.

There is one small but striking detail from the trial that gives a glimpse of life at the time. During the proceedings, as the court sat hearing evidence of murder, a young woman in the crowded courtroom was caught stealing a handkerchief from a young man's pocket. She was seized immediately, brought before the court, and within minutes you Jane Stevenson was sentenced to seven years' transportation. To Australia it seems almost unbelievable now, but it shows just how swift—and harsh—justice could be, even in the middle of such a serious trial.

Thomas Watson was sentenced to death.

On 5th August 1790, he was taken to the gallows at Westgate in Newcastle. Public executions were common, and crowds would gather to watch. We are told that Watson admitted he had “justly suffered.”

But he did not protest his sentence, though he showed little sign of deep regret.

After his execution, his body was taken for dissection, as was required for those convicted of murder.

The Memory Lingers

For George Gibson's family, the consequences would have been immediate and

lasting. A husband—and likely a father—the whole family would have been devastated. The farm at Coldrife, the household, the future—all would have been affected. In a place where survival depended on every pair of hands, such a loss would have been deeply felt in practical as well as emotional ways.

And in the parish, the memory of what had happened would have stayed. This was not the kind of crime that faded quickly. It was too close, too personal. It involved people who were known, in a place that still exists today.



It is easy to think of the past as quieter or simpler, but stories like this remind us that human nature has not changed all that much. At its heart, this is a story about how quickly things can spiral when anger takes hold.

Coldrife Farm still stands. The Fifes work the fields, the seasons pass, and life goes on much as it always has. But for a moment in 1790, it was the centre of something dark and tragic. And even now, more than two centuries later, that story still lingers quietly in the landscape around Coldrife.

NEXT MONTH: Something slightly more cheerful we hope!



THE PACK HORSE LEEK CLUB



MAY PLANT SALE

Spring is here at last and it's time to think about getting those tubs and hanging baskets ready.

The club is holding its "**May Plant Sale**" on
Saturday 9th May between 10-12pm.

It will be in conjunction with the EVH Coffee Morning. You will find us just outside the entrance to the hall, if not inside.

Bedding plants and vegetable plants will be for sale. Proceeds from the day will go towards our given Charity in December.

The March monthly draw winner was **Chris Ogilvie**



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Minutes of the of Parish Council Meeting
Monday 2nd February 20 in Ellingham Village Hall Ellingham
Website: <https://northumberlandparishes.uk/ellingham>

PRESENT: Chairman P Robson,
Parish Councillors O Simpson, Mrs J Thompson & G Unwin
Clerk: Mrs I Hunter
5 members of public

Public Question Time:

Member of the public raised the following concerns:

Northumberland County Council do not clear out the drains & sinks in Ellingham village on a regular basis, especially ahead of stormy weather, which causes flooding within the village. Please can the Parish Council consider finding volunteers to help clear of the drains etc in the village.

The Chairman replied that the Clerk should report the issue to County Councillor M Mather who is the Portfolio Holder for Highways, asking for the drains & sinks in Ellingham village to be cleaned out and the drainage system to be checked to ensure there is sufficient capacity to cope with the increased rainfall.

A manhole cover in Ellingham village lifted during the recent storm which ended up with the road in Ellingham village flooding.

The Chairman replied the issue is the capacity of the drains within the village and not being unable to cope during heavy rainfall. The action had already been agreed.

The Chairman gave a vote of thanks to the residents for clearing the drains during the recent stormy weather.

Please can the road sweeper sweep the road towards the Church every time it sweeps Ellingham village as this road is omitted from the regular route.

Parish Councillors agreed the Clerk report this issue on Fix my street.

Apologies for Absence: County Councillor G Renner-Thompson

Declarations of interest: None

Request for Dispensation: None

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th November 2025- Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2025 were a true record of the meeting.

The Chairman signed a hard copy of the minutes.

Matters Arising: None

Min 274- Ellingham Neighbourhood Plan- The Chairman informed the meeting that County Councillor G Renner-Thompson had advised him that the Northumberland County Council Local Plan “Call for sites” should be determined by the March Parish Council meeting which will allow the Ellingham Neighbourhood Plan to progress.

2 Members of the public left the meeting at that point

Min 275-Noticeboards- Parish Councillor Mrs J Thompson tabled 2 options for noticeboards from Noticeboard Warehouse, both options are made from recycled plastic material which will reduce the future maintenance costs.

Option 1- 4 xA4= £1026

Option 2- 6 x A4= £1350

Parish Councillors agreed to purchase 2 noticeboards (Option 2) to be erected at Tynley & opposite The Pack Horse pub.

The noticeboards to be delivered to Parish Councillor O Simpson who would organise the installation.

Parish Councillor Mrs J Thompson agreed to try to refurbish the noticeboard at Newham

The Chairman proposed replacing 2 noticeboards per year over the next 3 years. This was agreed.

1 member of the public joined the meeting at that point.

Min 276- Defibrillators- Parish Councillors ratified the payment of £292.79 to Wel Medical for 1x defibrillator battery.

Parish Councillor G Unwin informed the meeting that Ellingham Trust will make a payment to the Parish Council to cover the cost of the 1x defibrillator battery.

Parish Councillor G Unwin requested the Parish Council purchase 2 sets of pads for the Chathill defibrillator.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk order 2 sets of defibrillator pads to be delivered to Parish Councillor G Unwin.

Min 277- Financial Statement

Current Account	£ 5990.84
Savings Account	£ 940.92
Neighbourhood Plan Account	£ 0.00

Min 278- Accounts for payment- Parish Councillors agreed the following payments.

Wel Medical Ltd	£ 292.79	Defibrillators- 1x battery
I Hunter	£ 71.36	Salary 8 hours @ £14.82 per hr
HMRC	£ 47.20	PAYE
I Hunter	£ 6.88	Expenses

Min 279- Planning Applications- Parish Councillors ratified the Parish Council's submission of No Objections to the following planning applications.

25/04312/FUL- Removal and replacement of 1no equipment cabinet and 1no new power generator and associated ancillary works thereto- H3g Communications Mast Brownieside Northumberland

25/04410/FUL- Proposed rear single storey flat roof extension - 9 Carnaby Drive Ellingham Northumberland NE67 5EQ

Min 280- Planning Approvals

25/03768/FUL- Construction of Juliet balcony to first floor bedroom- 5 Maxwell Drive Ellingham Chathill Northumberland NE67 5EL

25/04410/FUL- Proposed rear single storey flat roof extension - 9 Carnaby Drive Ellingham Northumberland NE67 5EQ

Min 281- Highways/ Local Issues – updates

Parish Councillors considered the current situation of grit bins within the parish.

Parish Councillors agreed the following actions:

Parish Councillors or residents can request grit bins to be filled via Northumberland County Council Fix my Street.

The Clerk request Northumberland County Council install a grit bin at Newham.

Parish Councillors reported there are numerous potholes within the parish, agreeing all potholes could be reported on Northumberland County Council Fix my Street.

Parish Councillor Mrs J Thompson raised concerns that the grass verge on the back road at Ellingham village is collapsing.

The Chairman replied that the issue had been raised at the annual parish drive about.

The Chairman proposed the Clerk email County Councillor M Mather & G Renner-Thompson asking for a site meeting with the appropriate Northumberland County Council Highway officer to investigate the issue.

Min 282- Correspondence- Parish Councillors noted the following correspondence received.

Resident- Email- Re bus timetables

NCC Bus Ambassador- Emails- Re bus timetables

Beadnell Parish Councillor- Email- Chathill Station update.

Northumberland Parent Carer Forum- Email- Request for a donation.

NCC- Email- Reply to request for post on grass verge.

NCC- Email- Invite to Joint Town and Parish Council Conference on 5th March. Parish Councillors agreed not to attend the conference.

NCC- Email- Invite to Community Resilience Forums 2026

NCC-Email- Notice of making of the Public Spaces Protection Order for the control of dogs.

NCC- Email- Information from Town & Parish Council Liaison Working Group.

Min 283- County Councillor report- No report

Min 284- Parish Council website & email addresses

Parish Councillors noted that Northumberland County Council had provided a gov.uk website & gov.uk email address for each Parish Councillor & the Clerk.

Parish Councillors to set up their gov.uk email address.

Parish Councillors agreed the Clerk sign the previously circulated Service Level Agreement which was provided by Northumberland County Council.

Min 285- Budget 2026/27

Parish Councillors considered the previously circulated draft budget 2026/27.

Parish Councillors agreed that the NALC subscription for 2026 would need to be renewed as the Parish Council requires Standing Orders & policies

Parish Councillors agreed £3800 as the budget for 2026/27.

Any other Urgent Business:

Min 286- Local issues:

Parish Councillor Mrs J Thompson advised the meeting that a resident had approached her asking for the vegetation to be cut back on the boundary wall on the corner at the entrance to Ellingham village.

Parish Councillors agreed not to progress the request as the vegetation had been on the boundary wall for many years.

Parish Councillor Mrs J Thompson advised the meeting that a resident had approached her asking if the Parish Council knew who undertakes the spraying of the grass area under the hedgerows, seemingly this occurred in 2025, and the resident has concerns about the impact of the native plants that grow under the hedgerows.

Parish Councillors agreed that they were unaware of anyone undertaking spraying along the hedgerows, however, if the resident can obtain photos dates, and times the Parish Council will investigate.

Home Made Jams

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Back in 2014, Eileen asked Gustav Macleod to write piece for the Village Magazine at the time, talking about living in Ellingham.

Written 12 years ago, after living in Ellingham for 14 years, this is what Gus said. We reproduce his piece as it was written then. We can't help but wonder, does he still think the same? What do you think?

Our Community – Ellingham Parish

I was asked to write an article for the magazine by Eileen, scratched my head and offer my thoughts.

Fourteen years ago Jane and I moved into Ellingham, a village we had never heard about before even though we had passed by on the Chathill road many times on our way to Newton or Beadnell. Before choosing to live here we took a walk to get used to the place and ventured into the Pack Horse where we selected from the lunch menu wild boar sausages. Most of you probably remember this.

It is said that a community is a social unit that shares common values. I think it is more than that. I see it as a social unit that interacts to support and share values. It does not mean that every value is agreed upon. When we arrived as interlopers into the village we were soon absorbed into the social life of Millennium celebrations, leek club activities and church gatherings to help with the churchyard or celebrate Christmas.

Soon we knew most people in the Village and, shamefacedly, probably more people knew of us. This was more people than we had ever known in the streets living in Newcastle and Whitley Bay where we had lived previously.

Whereas many towns and cities seem to lose the spirit of community and have devised the 'Project for Public Spaces' to try and create 'Third Places' (after home and work places) in communities in order to bring people together in such places as coffee houses, local pubs, church and bookstores - we have just to walk along the road to meet and greet people we know and places where we can join others to talk and share activities.

People living in towns often do not know what they are missing. We have a vibrant community. Fair enough, we do not have a shop, but we have a village school, a church, a Village Hall and a pub which all go together to provide an infrastructure for meeting and support.

In common with many rural villages we have a high proportion of residents who are over 60. However, over 50% of the population is under 60 years old and many are eager to share new beginnings with the knowledge and experience that already exists.

The Ellingham Community Trust survey found that the most important priorities for the community were for broadband and transport. It shows our community is outward looking, seeking opportunities from the outside world and yet enjoying the security and friendliness of the community within.

We are mindful of the wonderful rural setting we live in and recognise the successes made. Diane and the staff and Governors at Ellingham School continue to fill the school with children from a large catchment area. Eileen is about to produce her booklet about people to be remembered from the area who died in the World Wars. Linnie is developing a flourishing business at the Pack Horse. John and the Leek Club drive many activities for the community. And all this set in an undeclared area of outstanding beauty where otters have been seen playing in the local stream, grey herons take regular drop-ins, red squirrels leap in the trees and the seasons marked by activity on our local farms.

What better place could we be in?

Gustav MacLeod

March 2014



The time of the Sunday Eucharist in the six coastal parishes on a Sunday is:-

Bamburgh St Aidan	11.00 am
Ellingham St Maurice	9.15 am
Beadnell St Ebba	9.00 am
Belford St Mary	9.00 am
Lucker St Hilda	11.00 am
North Sunderland St Paul	10.30 am

Useful Contact Information:

Vicar:

Rev Tony Macpherson: 07780990354 email: canontonymac@gmail.com

Churchwardens:

Dorothy Lightfoot : 01665 589463

Neil Mundy: 01665 589347

Clerk to Parish Council:

Isobel Hunter email: ellinghampc@gmail.com

Ellingham Community Trust:

07841 437614 (Trustee Brenda Frier) email: ellinghamcommunitytrust@gmail.com

Northumberland County Councilor: Guy Renner-Thompson

guy.renner-thompson@northumberland.gov.uk

North East Mayor (Public transport) Kim McGuinness

mayorsoffice@northeast-ca.gov.uk

Ellingham Village Hall:

07938 828699 email: admin@ellinghamvillagehall.com

All copy to the Editor (eileenduncan76@gmail.com) by 15th of the month. For non parishioners cost is £3.50 per year, payable to PCC Ellingham