

THE Grapevine

February 2026

Your community guide for Colton, Easton and Marlingford



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Useful contacts

St Peter's VC Primary School, Easton	01603 880553
Easton College	01603 731200
Easton College Tennis Centre	01603 731302 easton.tennis@ccn.ac.uk
Colton Village Hall	Marion Morse – 01603 880227 Dominic Castle – 01603 880191
Little Owls at Colton Village Hall	Katie Kemp 07790 276499
Colton Art Group	Rosanna Ellis – 07765 294347
Colton Carpet Bowls Club	Dennis Mickelburgh – 01603 880391 Avalon, The Street, Colton
Easton Bowls Club Secretary	Jan Hudson - 01603 880811 eastonbowls.bh@btinternet.com
Easton Crafters' Club	Mrs Janet Morris – 01603 471144
Easton Football Club	Michael Cossey – 01603 880143 73, Marlingford Way, Easton
Easton Good Companions	Pamela Hooker – 01603 880867
Easton Gym Club	01603 960511 enquiries@eastongymnasticsclub.com
Easton Judo Club Coach	Chris Abel – 0845 388 6895 chris@eastonjudoclub.co.uk 29, Goulburn Rd, Norwich
Easton Junior Football	Gavin Tipple – 01603 731585 gtipple@easton-college.ac.uk
Easton Sports Centre	Colin Brzeczek 01603 731263
Easton Post Office	Open Tues and Thurs 9am-2pm 01603 880007
Easton Village Hall	Roly and Christine Chapman 01603 880654
Easton WI Secretary	Sandra Bowman 01603 881538
Marlingford Village Hall Bookings	Sue Hester M: 07887 686046 susan.hester@btinternet.com
Community Car Scheme for Easton only	Jean and Dave Ditton – 01603 880857
Citizens' Advice Bureau	Wymondham 03444 111444
Relate	01603 625333
Samaritans	0330 094 5717

Doctors surgeries

Costessey, Roundwell 01603 744014
Beechcroft 01603 746683
Hethersett 01603 977477
Mattishall 01362 850227

Hospitals

**Norfolk & Norwich
incl W Norwich** 01603 286286
Julian & Hellesdon 01603 421421
Dereham, Northgate 01362 697300
Kelling 01263 710575

Police

Non urgent 101 **or visit website:**
 norfolk.police.uk/contact-us/6-report-it
Urgent 999

Parish Council Clerks

Easton: clerk@eastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Marlingford & Colton

Maria Hutson 01603 850118
 clerk@marlingfordandcolton-pc.
 gov.uk

Councillor South Norfolk District and Norfolk County

Margaret Dewsbury 01603 759693
 6, Park Avenue, Barford NR9 4BA

Location of defibrillators:

Colton - Village hall, Norwich Rd; NR9 5BY

Easton - Village hall, Marlingford Rd,
 NR9 5AD

Rembrandt Restaurant, 65 Dereham Rd.

Lower Easton, 76 Ringland Rd;

Marlingford: The Bell, Bawburgh Road.
 NR9 5HX

Advertisers can supply high resolution
 jpg or pdf files of their own colour
 adverts to the correct sizes. (contact
 treasurer for details).

The Grapevine

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Contact the Assistant Editor or the
 Treasurer for more advertising details.

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Black & white inside:

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	£300	£400	£500
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Front cover: Recent snowy sunrise.
 Picture: Annette Hudson.

Please note: information in The Grapevine is provided
 in good faith. The publication and its board cannot be
 held responsible for any inaccuracies and any opinions
 expressed are the author's own.

Information on local bus service connections

Norfolk County Council has announced the following **revised timetable**, which is effective from 3rd November 2025. The times listed here are confirmed by NCC Passenger Transport Department and also correspond with the timetables published on the current bus company websites.

NEW BUS TIMETABLE Service 808, on Tuesdays and Thursdays only:

From	At	Arrives	Connects to:
Marlingford Bell	09:06	Easton: Dereham Road bus shelter at 09:22 (or Longwater Retail Park, Link Road at 09:27)**	Konect 4 service from Easton to Norwich bus station at 09:26 Arrives 10.00 (or from Longwater to Norwich at 09:33)
Colton, The Street pond	09:14		
Colton, junction Norwich Road and The Street	09:20		
		Connects with	Arrives
Konect 4 service from Norwich to Longwater at 12:15 Arriving 12:47 (or Easton: Dereham Road bus shelter at 12.52)	808 service from Longwater Retail Park, Link Road at 12:55 (or Easton: Dereham Road bus shelter at 13:00)	Colton junction with Norwich Road and The Street	13:03
		Colton, The Street pond	13:06
		Marlingford Bell	13:07
Longwater Retail Park, Link Road at 11:15 (Easton: Dereham Road bus shelter at 11:20)	**ADDITIONAL SERVICE FROM LONGWATER ONLY	Colton junction with Norwich Road and The Street	11:23
		Colton, The Street pond	11:24
		Marlingford Bell	11:29

The Flexibus Service will also continue to be provided, with the service now being supplied by Our Bus. In addition to the current arrangements, there will be a new pre-booked service to N&NUH at 07:50 and 17:45. To book a bus, call **0800 0351350 or 01493 224361**

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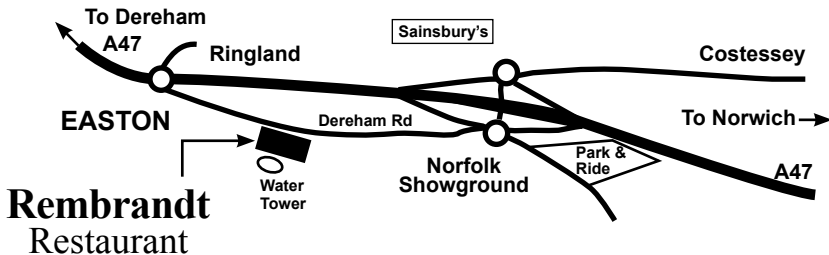
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For latest information

please see the website or phone

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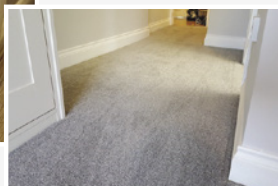
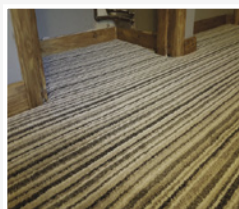
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THE Grapevine



Your community really needs you!

Many of us have grown up without the benefit of email or mobile phones and, while we all appreciate the convenience of these things, we now seem to be losing the ability to connect with our neighbours in ways that may be important in the future. Community is a precious thing – knowing you have neighbours who are there to help if you need it, or are there to meet up with and enjoy activities together, who you can discuss local issues with and maybe work together to

resolve can only improve your quality of life. Marlingford and Colton Parish Council are down to three councillors and really need people to step up and get involved. The council meets once every two months – it's not much time to give up to make sure your village is looked after! Try supporting your village hall events – it's great for meeting neighbours and making new friends. Let's try and keep the community spirit alive!

Annette Hudson

Where you can find our online editions

You can access each issue of *The Grapevine* online. Visit the **Easton parish council** (eastonparishcouncil.gov.uk) and the **Marlingford and Colton parish council** (marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk) websites, the **Nextdoor** website and on the **Easton Festival Park Facebook** page. If you would like digital copies, please send your email address to: annettegh57@gmail.com and you will be added to a list of subscribers.

Our printed editions are published in Dec/Jan, March, May, July/Aug and October and are distributed in Easton, Colton and Marlingford.

If you enjoy reading *The Grapevine* and would like to make a donation towards the cost of more printed editions, you can do so by bank transfer:

Account name:

The Grapevine Magazine

Business account no: 20420956

Sort code: 20-99-08

Thank you!

Deadline for items for the March issue: Monday, February 16, 2026
Email as word doc to: annettegh57@gmail.com

YOUR VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Colton Village Hall

● Valentine's Day tea & cakes

Saturday, February 14

Cakes with a Valentine's Day theme plus a cup of tea or coffee in the afternoon. 3pm - 5pm.

● Village Hall Committee AGM plus Mothers' Day tea & cakes

Saturday, March 14

10.30pm-12.30pm. Give your mum a treat. Bring her along to the village hall for a cuppa and some glorious cakes which follows village hall AGM.

● Easter Bingo

Saturday, March 28

A fun family evening with prizes! Doors open 6.30pm. Eyes down, 7pm.

● Sofa SOS!

We're looking to make the hall a little more comfortable with some small sofas so if you have an old, but decent sofa going begging please get in touch! (we could also use a few small tables...) Donations gratefully received. Contact Dominic Castle on 01603 880191.

Easton Village Hall

● Easton Pop In – use it or lose it!

We welcome everybody from the village to simply POP IN anytime from 10 until 11.45 every Tuesday for a quick cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit. You are always



welcome to join us.

We are also always looking for volunteers to help us!

Brenda and Tony

● Good Companions

Good Companions are having a **Meet and Greet afternoon** with teas and coffees from 2pm-4pm once a month on a Thursday afternoon when anyone over the age of 57 is eligible to join us. February's date is **Thursday 26**. Please support us!

● Easton Crafters

We had a lovely Christmas party with entertainment from Gary and our usual Secret Santa gift. We meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Easton Village Hall between 1.30pm and 4.30pm.

For more information, ring **Janet** on **01603 471144**

● Easton WI

Easton WI meets on the second Thursday of the month (except August) at Easton Village Hall at 7.30pm. You are very welcome to come and meet us!

Bawburgh Village Hall

Talks for everyone

● **A Career in Ruins – Giles Emery**

Tuesday, February 10 at 7.30pm

Giles will tell us about his 25 years working as a professional archaeologist in Norfolk and some of his discoveries from the prehistoric to more recent ones.

● **Opals – Maria Pennington**

Tuesday, March 10 at 7.30pm

Maria Pennington is a professional jeweller, trainer and merchandiser to the jewellery trade. Her talk this year will be on 'Opals', a magical gem of many colours which was thought to be a symbol of hope, purity and truth.

Entrance £3 includes tea or coffee

Do come to our talks. There really is something for everyone!

Marlingford Village Hall

● **Yoga on Wednesdays at 7pm**

Endeavour to access your higher self with some gentle yoga classes in Marlingford Village Hall.

Instructor Dom Jarvis will aim to heal, strengthen and soothe with a six-week course which you can try for free and then pay what you can afford. Beginners are welcome and booking is open now.

**E: gentlyyogadom@gmail.com
or message 07784 755039.**

VALENTINE'S DAY TEA IN THE AFTERNOON

**at Colton Village Hall
Saturday, February 14
From 3pm-5pm**



Show some  love for
your village hall!

Join us for tea or coffee and
cake in the afternoon

Colton Art & Craft Group

**Wednesdays
10am-12pm**

Meet fortnightly at
**Colton village hall
£3 per session**

For more details
contact Rosanna Ellis
on 07765294347
rosannaellis@btinternet.com

Community News and Fundraising Events

Eyes firmly down for a festive full house!

There was no room to move in Colton village hall in December as residents packed the place for the Christmas bingo night. There were plenty of prizes and plenty of winners as callers Santa Dom Castle and elf helper Dennis Mickelburgh sang out the numbers. The evening also included the annual handing out of the allotment fund to Colton residents, some of whom were happy to spend the cash on bingo tickets thus supporting the village hall. Others were able to donate their



Dom and Dennis do their thing in a packed hall.



money to the church fund if they wished. The evening raised £274.50. A coffee morning the same day raised £66.



Offshoot in between songs...

A rare opportunity to sing-a-long-a sixties!

Colton Village hall was the location for resident band Offshoot to stage a free gig in November featuring the Sounds of the Sixties. Memories were jogged with such numbers as Cathy's Clown, I Got You Babe, I'm a Believer and Pretty Woman while the audience

were provided with song sheets so everyone could sing along. The event even featured a psychedelic ceiling show and a rail of sixties clothes for those who really wanted to feel the vibe! The evening raised £144 in donations for the village hall fund.



Vintage tractors take to the road for church fund

The sound of a tractor passing my home in the morning is not unusual but to hear more means something special.

The owners, collectors and riders of old tractors had arranged with the Marlingford Bell pub to bring them there as the base of this recent Road Run.

Off they went one by one: to Barnham Broom and Brandon Parva and Runhall, taking a stop at Model Farm for bacon sandwiches.

Then returning back to Marlingford Bell, all 33 tractors of varying ages having done about 14 miles.

I had been asked to be at the Bell after their return. The drivers and helpers were being refreshed and were grateful to the Bell owners and to Easton College for the use of Model Farm.

They had taken a collection of £274.60 for Marlingford Church, for which I thanked them.

Felicity Maton



Some of the tractors that took part in the Road Run.



Pictures: Felicity Maton

What can police stop and search you for?

There's been a lot about it in the news lately with regard to knife crime but what would cause a person to be stopped and searched? The police say it is a hugely important police power for protecting the public, tackling crime and keeping our streets safe and should never be used lightly. Police officers must only use their legal right to stop members of the public and search them, when doing so will further their investigations into criminal activity. Some examples could be looking for weapons, drugs or stolen property.

By allowing officers to investigate an individual without having to arrest them, it can avoid unnecessary arrests.

● The police can stop, or stop and



search, a person or a vehicle if they think they:

- have an item which has been stolen or are carrying objects, made or adapted, to commit; theft, fraud, criminal damage, or offences related to protests
- are in possession of a dangerous or offensive

weapon or corrosive substance

- have evidence related to certain crimes
- may be carrying drugs
- are carrying a weapon that has been used, or intend to use at a serious violent incident

The police can also stop or stop and search under anti-terrorism measures.

● **For more information on Stop and Search, visit norfolk.police.uk/advice**

Your Local Safer Neighbourhood Team

Beat Manager

Stuart Barnard Sgt 499

E: SNTCostessey@norfolk.police.uk



Updating you on issues in your area and co-ordinating volunteers, specials, speedwatch and cadets.

Beat Manager

Andrew Sneddon PC

T: 101 Ext: 5699

E: SNTCostessey@norfolk.police.uk



Engaging with your community to solve local issues and helping to keep you safe.

News from Easton Women's Institute

First visit of new year

Easton WI had a very successful Christmas meeting in December and are looking forward to a busy 2026. This did not get off to a good start however, as we were unable to meet that month due to the weather in early January but the following week, we did manage to go and visit the Egyptian Coptic Church in the village as we had planned to do. We were joined by a few members of Hethersett WI to swell the numbers.

The priests and some members of their congregation welcomed us warmly and proudly showed us round their amazing church building. We were served refreshments and they even rang the church bell for us to hear. We then adjourned to the golf driving range restaurant for a very good lunch. We all agreed that we

had had a really good day without actually leaving Easton!

Many thanks to everyone who helped to make this happen!

Next meeting

Weather permitting, we will have our usual monthly meeting on **Thursday, February 12** at 7.30pm when **Sandra Roberts** will be organising a creative evening.

Birthday celebrations

Then, looking ahead to March, we will be celebrating our 73rd birthday meeting on **Thursday, March 12** with a **Murder Mystery** evening led by **Julie Porter**.

Easton WI would love to welcome some new members and if anyone is interested in finding out a bit about us, we are happy for you to come to one of our meetings to meet us and hopefully enjoy an evening with us.

Mary Blathwayt



Members enjoy a visit to the Coptic Church in January.

Pictures: Supplied

Look out – mandatory eyesight tests for our older drivers seems set to come in...



Government crackdown on senior drivers.

Picture: Unsplash

Over 70 and still driving? Well, you might not be much longer if your old peepers aren't up to scratch.

It looks likely that the government will introduce mandatory eyesight tests for senior motorists in the near future, meaning that anyone entering their eighth decade will need to pass the check every three years before being allowed back behind the wheel.

The news seems to have been received relatively calmly – even Age UK, defenders of the senior citizen, muttered a bit about ageism and said that they'd wait and see the evidence before forming a final view.

But you could be forgiven for

feeling that the tests are part of a creeping drive (no pun intended) to get older drivers off the road.

That might have wider implications on the economy – I have a friend who has an HGV licence and, at the age of 77, still hauls sugar beet and malt around Norfolk's roads in 44-tonne lorries. He won't be the only one of a certain age whose experience behind the wheel of a commercial vehicle would be missed. We're short enough of truck drivers as it is.

There's little doubt that younger drivers have more accidents and that speeding and mobile phone use are significant contributors to the causes of these crashes.

I wonder how it would go down if

the boot was on the other foot and it was young motorists who were in the crosshairs?

Mind you, at this time of year driving around county roads is a pretty joyless experience for everyone, no matter how well you can see.

Low sun on wet roads, potholes big enough to become tourist attractions to rival Cheddar Gorge, ice, and, on narrow country lanes like the ones in our parishes, mud, smeared across the carriageway by cars squeezing past each other during one of the diversions caused by A47 closures which seem to happen more frequently than we'd like.

If I'd been granted a more shrewd financial brain I would, a few years ago, have sunk my pension pot into the firm that makes *Road Closed* signs. I'd be minted. They pop up

every few yards these days, along with a few yellow *Diversion* signs which seem to give a metaphorical shrug as if to say; "You might as well go that way, mate. It's as good as any, probably. Or not. I dunno. Good luck finding the next sign"

I think what really gets my goat is the apparent wilful lack of coordination between every Tom, Dick and Harriet who decide to dig up the road. Or not dig up the road. How many times have you seen a set of 'works', perhaps guarded by temporary traffic lights, where there is no actual work taking place?

And was it really necessary to do all the massive alterations on the A47 at once? When will it all end? Never mind about taking another eyesight test, I'm seeing red as it is.

Dominic Castle



A familiar sight on our Norfolk roads these days...

Picture: Dominic Castle

Continuing a series of pieces taken from the *Memories of Marlingford* book featuring stories about the village and villagers, past and present.

My Childhood in Marlingford Part three by Joan Travis (nee Smith)

Continuing along Church Road stood, and still stands, the lovely Norman Church, behind which is Marlingford Hall, then occupied by Major and Mrs Evans Lombe. A lodge stood at the entrance to the hall drive and some of the occupants I can recall were Mr and Mrs Arthur Crowe, Mr Crowe being the butler / chauffeur at the hall. At the junction of Church Road and Common Road (or School Road) stood the Mill House and the Mill. Here lived Mr Dack, the chauffeur at the hall, and his daughter, Jean - Mrs Maurice Bailey, together with her husband and son, John. A turn into Common Road led to the rectory, a large house standing back from the road. Some of the rectory's occupants were Miss Ottaway who was church organist, also Mr and Mrs Claude Dawson. The land next along was the common, followed by the village hall, built in 1924. Opposite the village hall was the football field which was an ideal playground for the school which adjoined it. The school caretakers lived in the schoolhouse adjoining the school,



Marlingford Mill

Mr and Mrs Harry Roberts and their children, Clifford, Leslie and Marjorie. Opposite the school were six council houses. The pair nearest the village hall, occupied by the Hipperson and Childerhouse families, were built soon after the village hall, but I can remember the building of the next two pairs during my latter days as a pupil at the school, around 1934-1935. A house owned by Mr and Mrs Harry Sadd, Belle Vue, stood next. Last in that road was a bungalow, West View, occupied by 'Old Mrs Sadd' presumably the mother of Harry Sadd. After her death Mr and Mrs Clifford Morgan became the occupants of West View, Mrs Morgan being the Head Teacher at Marlingford School. The continuation of Common Road ended at The Bell, the completion of a round trip of the village.

I spent the first years of my education at the Church of England school from the age of three years, presumably owing to the incurable illness of my dad, until 1935, when I managed to obtain a scholarship to Notre Dame High School for girls, in Surrey Street, Norwich. I have nothing but happy memories of my school days at Marlingford. My first teacher was Miss Audrey Mann, followed by Miss Kathleen Woodcock. I don't know how I learned to read or do sums, perhaps because these subjects came easy to me. I do remember the problems I had with handwriting because I was left-handed. This was considered a handicap and was frowned upon in the 1920s and 30s so I was constantly being corrected about which hand to use when writing. This became a source of great worry to me and is, I believe, the cause of my bad handwriting. I have always been unable to easily tell right from left and, having given



Mrs Morgan with the Rev Burt.

so many incorrect directions, I would point to the direction needle or give my wedding ring a quick glance.

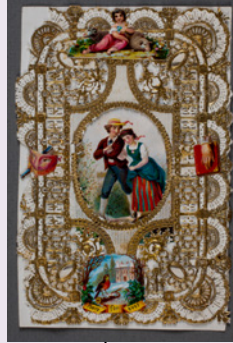
My transfer to the 'Big Room' came at the age of seven years. Here the head teacher taught children with an age range of seven to 14 years. Miss Hovell was my first teacher here – she followed Miss Weddall who was Head when I started school. The arrival of a new Head in around 1933 heralded big changes in Marlingford School. Mrs Elizabeth Morgan arrived from Ebbw Vale, South Wales, and accompanied by her husband, Clifford, lived temporarily with Mr and Mrs Bunnett until they took up residence at West View. She was a forward-looking teacher, dedicated to the task of educating children of varying ages and ability, and must have spent most of her time at weekends and evenings preparing lessons and marking our work. Together with her husband who, at that time, was suffering from ill health, she introduced football and cricket for the boys, and stoolball for the girls.

Coming, as she did, from South Wales, music was of importance to the curriculum and we learnt to enjoy our singing lessons, singing rounds and part songs as well as usual folk songs.

● **More from Joan in April.**

Esther Howland – mother of the US Valentine

Esther Howland, born in 1828, began her studies as an artist at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. At the age of 19, Esther received a Valentine card from a business associate of her father decorated with an elaborate fine lace border, ornate flowers cut-outs and a small pale green envelope in the centre that contained a Valentine's Day verse. At this time, elaborate Valentine greeting cards were imported from Europe and not affordable to many Americans. Determined she could make a better card, Esther persuaded her father to order some supplies and she made a dozen samples that her salesman brother took on his next sales trip. She was elated when her brother returned with over \$5,000 worth of business for her. Esther built a thriving business in Worcester, Massachusetts using an assembly line of friends to copy designs and help construct the cards. She would cut the basic design for the individual valentine while the assembly group then carefully copied each card. Her early cards contained short four-line verses pasted inside of them much like earlier English valentines. This model



Examples of Esther's cards.
Pictures: Wikipedia

would eventually become standard for the American Valentine market. Although Valentine's Day cards had been available in America for more than half a century before, Esther was the first person to commercialise them.

In 1850, Esther found herself in the position of businesswoman. She began to import materials and also came up with the idea of using silk and embossing lithograph ornaments.

To distinguish her valentines, Esther began stamping the letter "H" on the back of her cards

in red ink and the letters N.E.V.Co. – *New England Valentine Company*. Cards could include ribbons, artistic illustrations, hidden doors and interior envelopes that could hold secret messages, locks of hair or even engagement rings.

Esther eventually sold the business to a competitor, George Whitney, in 1880 in order to take care of her sick father. Her Valentine cards became renowned throughout the United States and after her death in 1904, she was called "The Mother of the American Valentine".

News regarding road closures on the A47

the A47 will be closed in one direction overnight between the Honingham and Easton roundabouts from January 26 to 29, 2026 between 8pm and 6am each night.

Temporary traffic lights will be installed to allow traffic to flow in both directions.

Then, on Friday, January 30 between 8pm and 6am, the A47 will be fully closed in both directions and traffic will be diverted.

The recommended diversions will follow the routes used during the recent (November 2025) weekend closure.

Additionally, in order to complete the work safely the A47 between the Fox Lane (Dereham interchange) junction and the Longwater roundabout, the A47 will be fully closed in both directions 8pm Friday, February 13 until 6am Monday, February 16.

In case the work cannot be completed, there is a contingency closure in place from 8pm Friday, February 27 to 6am Sunday, March 1.

During this closure there will be a contraflow on the westbound carriageway between Fox Lane junction and the western end of the dual carriageway. This will allow for construction of a tie-in of the



Work on the A47. Picture: National Highways

new dual carriageway.

Traffic will also be switched onto a new local access road between Honingham and Easton roundabouts with traffic being routed south of the new Norwich Road junction.

Taverham Road will now be fully closed until October 2026, at the junction of the current A47 as part of this switch.

Temporary access will be maintained for Honingham Church. All side road access will be closed onto the A47.

Residents living directly on the A47 will be escorted through the closure by traffic marshals when access is required.

Access routes through the closure will be maintained for the Emergency Services.

For more information, visit:

[nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads](https://www.nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads)

Marlingford and Colton Parish Council

Your Parish Councillors:
Mr J Morse, Chairman

Vice Chairman
Mark Pfeiffer

Cllr Deborah Perfect

Parish council meetings and 2026 dates and venues

Meetings are held in January, March, May, July, September and November, normally on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

Agendas are posted on the parish council noticeboards and the website at least three days beforehand. The public are welcome to attend all meetings where there is an opportunity to speak and ask questions.

Please note, if you would like an item to appear on the agenda, details must be sent to the clerk at least 10 days before the meeting. The council is unable to make a decision on anything not included on the agenda but can discuss newly-raised matters and refer them to the next meeting.

Minutes of meetings are posted on the website:

marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk and are available from the clerk but remain in draft form until they are agreed at the next meeting.

The remaining meetings for 2026 will be at Colton Village Hall on:

- March 10,
- May 12 (annual parish meeting and annual parish council meeting)
- July 7 (1st Tuesday of month)
- September 8
- November 10

Annual budget and precept for 2026/27

The parish council precept is a proportion of your council tax bill that goes to the parish or town council. Marlingford and Colton Parish Council is responsible for the management of street furniture such as dog bins, seats, notice boards as well as the cutting of the amenity areas in both villages.

The council also maintains the equipment in the play areas and the fencing and gates surrounding them. Grants are also given to a number of village organisations such as the churches towards the upkeep of the churchyards and towards the publication of *The Grapevine* parish magazine.

At the November 2025 parish council meeting, the precept for 2026/27 was agreed at £20,000, an 8% increase on the current

financial year. This equates to an annual precept of £126.58 on a band D property or £2.43 per week. The council will continue to offer good value for money to residents while ensuring the village is well maintained for all to use.

Resignation and vacancies

After many years as a parish councillor, David Woods has decided to step down. The council would like to thank him for his time and commitment to being a parish councillor.

Marlingford and Colton Parish Council can have a maximum of seven councillors. It currently has just three, the minimum legally allowed to be able to operate. The council is very keen to recruit new councillors and welcomes residents to get in touch or attend the next meeting on **Tuesday, March 10**

To be eligible to be considered as a parish councillor you must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights

Meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you

wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.

- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination.
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area.
- You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination.

If you have any questions regarding becoming a parish councillor please contact the clerk on the details below.

Overnight road closures

Over the next few weeks there will be a number of road closures along the A47 as work continues on improving the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton.

For up-to-date information on the work and closure dates, visit:

nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east/a47

Maria Hutson, clerk to Marlingford and Colton Parish Council,

T: **01603 850118**

E: clerk@marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk

W: marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk

Easton Parish Council

Your parish councillors:

Chairman – Mark Caton

Vice-chair – Jan Hudson

Cllr David Lewis

Cllr Des Fulcher

Cllr Peter McCarter

Cllr Roly Chapman

Cllr Mark Cordy

Cllr Mike Jobling

Cllr Mike Bowman

Cllr Alexis Main

Planning

The council considered details relating to interim travel plans for phases of an existing development but had no comments to raise. A planning decision regarding works to an existing bund was also noted. Financial matters were in good order, with routine payments approved, including the clerk's salary, HMRC contributions and parish online software costs.

Community centre project

Trustees of the new village hall committee have been working with Community Action Norfolk and have received helpful advice and costings as they move towards setting up a charity to run the premises. Progress now depends on finalising the lease, and councillors agreed to appoint Clapham Collinge Solicitors to move this forward.

The council was pleased to welcome Sarah Royall from Norfolk Police,



who attended on her day off. Residents raised concerns including speeding through the village, illegal parking in cycle lanes, parking around the school, anti-social behaviour and road safety near the showground roundabout. The council thanked Sarah for her time and input.

Reports confirmed that all play equipment is in good condition, and no immediate action is needed at the allotments, aside from keeping an eye out for leaks during the colder weather.

Next meeting

The next parish council meeting is scheduled for

● **Tuesday, February 3 2026**
at 7pm.

Residents are always welcome to attend and take part in the public discussion.

E: clerk@eastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

W: eastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

An introduction to your MP for South Norfolk

Hello — I'm Ben Goldsborough, your Member of Parliament for South Norfolk.



I'm delighted to be contributing to *The Grapevine* magazine and to have the opportunity to share updates on the work I'm doing on your behalf, as well as keeping you informed about what's happening locally. From day one, I've made it my mission to be the most accessible MP South Norfolk has ever had, and I value opportunities like this to connect with our community, ensure you know what's going on, and make sure that your views are being heard and represented.

As we settle into 2026, I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy new year. In this first contribution to the magazine, I wanted to briefly explain how you can get in touch with me and share a bit about what my team and I can do for you.

If you have an issue you'd like to raise, need assistance, or have ideas you'd like to share, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can email me at **ben.goldsborough.mp@parliament.uk**, or call my constituency office in Long Stratton on **01603 570332** to speak to a member of my team. The office is

open Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. If you would prefer to write to me, please send your correspondence to the following address:

Ben Goldsborough MP

House of Commons

Westminster

London, SW1A 0AA

My team and I are here to help, whether that means helping you navigate the system or to get you the support that you are entitled to, we will do everything we can to ensure that you get the outcomes you need. In fact, since taking office in 2024, we have collectively assisted in the recovery of over £375,000 for South Norfolk constituents, businesses and charities alike – wins that make a real difference to the community.

I'm proud to represent South Norfolk and will continue working hard to ensure your voices are heard in Parliament. Thank you for taking the time to read my contribution, and I look forward to keeping you updated throughout the year ahead on the work we're doing in Colton, Easton, Marlingford and beyond. Together, we can continue to strengthen our community, and I look forward to hearing from many of you in the months ahead.

Ben Goldsborough MP

The Rambling Vine

You are dust – and to dust you shall return...



Spring blossom.

Picture: Marcus Spiske/Unsplash

February is a curious month. It arrives with bare hedges and muddy boots, Valentine's cards in the shops and snowdrops pushing their way through our churchyards and verges. It is a month that speaks of love - loudly, if you listen to the card displays! And yet this year it also quietly ushers us towards Lent, with Ash Wednesday falling not long after the last box of chocolates has been reduced in the Co-op. Love and ashes: hearts and dust. At first glance, they seem an odd pairing. Valentine's Day celebrates romance, affection, the joy of being known and cherished. Lent, on the other hand, begins with a stark reminder

of our frailty: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Not exactly a slogan for a greetings card. And yet, perhaps they belong together more than we realise. Love, at its deepest, is not just about grand gestures or perfect moments. It is about faithfulness, patience, forgiveness. It's about choosing one another again and again, especially when life is messy or hard. In our villages, we know something about that kind of love. It's there in the neighbour who keeps an eye on an empty house, the quiet lift offered without fuss, the long memory of shared histories and shared losses. Lent invites us to look honestly at

ourselves. Not to wallow in guilt, but to clear away what distracts us from what truly matters. It is a season of simplification, of re-learning how to love well: God, one another, and the world entrusted to us.

After my time away on sabbatical, walking ancient paths and visiting holy places, I was reminded that faith is less about having all the answers and more about paying attention. Attention to where we are. To who we are becoming. To the love that meets us not in perfection, but in honesty. So perhaps this February is asking us gentle questions rather than

demanding quick answers.

What kind of love do we want to grow? What do we need to lay down, or let go of, as the year unfolds? What might new life look like, even now, when the fields are still bare? Snowdrops don't shout. They simply appear, quietly reminding us that winter is not the whole story.

As Lent begins, and as hearts are exchanged and ashes traced, my prayer for us all is that we discover again a love that is deep, resilient, and rooted. A love that lasts far longer than February.

With every blessing,

Rev Laura Montgomery

More news on St Andrew's Church, Colton

Colton PCC would like to thank all those who donated their Fuel Allotment monies to St Andrew's Church – a total of £360 which is much appreciated. As most of you know, the church received a sizeable legacy two years ago. However, 65% of that has now been spent on improving church facilities and repairs to the masonry and stained-glass windows. The remainder is invested and, with a depleting congregation, we now rely on the interest from the investment to make ends meet with our annual running costs. It was lovely to see the church full



for the Christmas carol service accompanied by Cawston Brass Band. Colton village's younger generation (ages eight to 20 something) took turns in reading

passages from the Christmas story after which coffee and mince pies were served. A collection was made during the service and £200 was donated to St Martin's Housing Trust supporting homeless. Thank you again to all those who contributed.

Those who attended the service will have seen the work carried out on the masonry and stained-glass windows which is still awaiting completion. Their colours will be much better appreciated when we can get the sun shining through them once more.

Church services 2026		
February		
Sunday 1	10.00am	Easton – Holy Communion – Candlemas
Sunday 8	3.00pm	Colton – All Age Communion Colton
Sunday 15	10.00am	Marlingford – Holy Communion
Sunday 22	10.00am	Bawburgh – Holy Communion

Mobile library 2026 – February dates			
Marlingford – Route: CEN 423 Thursday: Feb 19			
Stop	Arrives	Departs	Postcode
Mill Road	10.40am	10.55am	NR9 5HL
Colton Road near Home Farm	11.00am	11.20pm	NR9 5HU
Colton –Route: CEN 319 Wednesday: Feb 18			
Ex post Office	9.45am	10.00am	NR9 5DB
Easton –Route: CEN 423 Thursday: Feb 19			
Parker's Close	11.30am	11.50am	NR9 5EE
Marlingford Road	11.55am	12.15pm	NR9 5AD
Marlingford Way	12.20am	12.40pm	NR9 5HB
Kennedy Close	12.45pm	13.05pm	NR9 5EY
St Peter's Drive	13.10pm	13.30pm	NR9 5HF
Please note this information is subject to change or amendment both on a permanent and temporary basis. For all enquiries call 01603 222303.			

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