

THE RENHOLD MAGAZINE

MAY 2026





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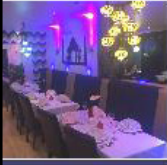


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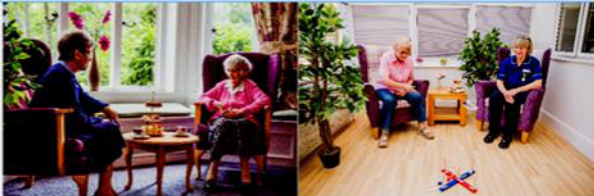
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EDITORIAL MAY EDITION – AMANDA QUINCE

In May 2026, Britain marks one hundred years since the General strike a nine day stoppage that brought much of the country to a standstill. A century on, the General Strike remains both a cautionary tale and a symbol: a moment when millions challenged the economic and political order, and a reminder of the possibilities, and limits, of collective action. While the economy and workforce have changed, sadly, the core questions about fairness, power and protest haven't gone away!

One more modest example of the possibilities of collective action is Renhold's own Neighbourhood Plan. Five years ago, a journey began for a group of volunteers from the Parish. Post Referendum, the prime responsibility for the implementation of the Plan now lies with the Parish Council who may well ask for future support from previous members of the Working Group. It is also possible that they may cast their net wider and look for parishioners, new to the task, in order to seek new and different skill sets. Please keep your eyes peeled.

Our focus on the Year of Reading continues with a vivid account of Renhold Primary's celebration of World Book Day. This special day every March acts as a pivotal, high profile cornerstone, driving the 'Go All In' campaign to make reading a life-long habit and, in our school's case, fostering enjoyment of reading beyond the classroom to improve literacy.

Our Quick-Fire Q&A this month features human dynamo Canon Lynda Klimas. Lynda is a true trailblazer within the Church of England. Ordained in 1994, she was one of the first women to be so privileged and she is one of just 33 Honorary Chaplains to the King, receiving an invitation to the Royal Garden Party every year.

In the Hot Seat this month is Martin Darlow. He is a mine of information on the role of the Deputy Lieutenant, international and local cricket and school improvement, and he

reminds us all of that adage, 'Behind every successful man there is a woman'! Oh, and he would be an excellent dinner guest at a Murder Mystery Party too.

Pauline, our Roving Reporter, connects her love of poetry with lifelong learning with her tribute to Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, following her recent study course at The Rothsay Education Centre, a charity dedicated to learning and connection, where people can expand their knowledge and meet like-minded individuals.

If you enjoy nostalgic seventies music and would like to grab one of the last few tickets for the Fynnius Fogg Concert at the Village Hall on May 16th, please let me know. Tickets are £20 and include a drink and some nibbles. All proceeds go to local charity BOLD who do so much to support adults with learning disabilities, regardless of race, creed, class or cultural values.

Countless opportunities await you in this Parish. If you would like to take part in the All Saints' Annual Quiz at 7:00pm on Friday May 8th, please contact the Church Wardens. Teams of 4 are welcome at £15 a head, which includes a fish and chip supper. If you would like to join Nicky on the Parish Litter Pick on May 23rd, please let her know. Isabelle, our Junior Reporter, visited Wilden Cricket Club to learn more about the youth opportunities there and Janet, my co-editor tested her wits with a visit to the Memory Café. Please do pop down to experience these for yourselves.

Finally, our focus on community spirit continues with our beloved Ward Councillor Nicky, who, it would seem has no end to her talents. Now a proficient animal rescuer, she has an abandoned ferret, which she caught late one night in the village last month, in temporary residence. His companion, a skunk, was not so lucky however. He has been spotted on the Green and in Becher Close, but has yet to find a warm and loving home here in Renhold! Enjoy your read!

MAY 2026

School dates Summer term Tuesday 14th April - Friday 17th July
Half-term Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May

Notable Renhold dates & events RVH (Renhold Village Hall)
CH (Chapter House at All Saints Church)
ASR (All Saints Renhold)

Date	Event	Time	Key
Sunday 3rd May	Confirmation Service	11:00	ASR
Thursday 7th May	WI Bayeux Tapestry Talk	19:00	RVH
Saturday 9th May	Pop up Café	10:00	CH
Monday 11th May	Creative Club	19:30	CH
Thursday 14th May	Ascension Day Communion	19:30	ASR
Saturday 16th May	Churchyard Clear-Up	09:30	ASR
Saturday 16th May	Charity Fund raiser Fynnius Fogg	19:00	RVH
Monday 18th May	Donut Club (12-14)	18:00	CH
Wednesday 20th May	Messy Church	15:30	ASR
Every Thursday	Renhold Clangers	19:00	ASR

Please be aware that all items for inclusion in the magazine - articles, notices of events, reports on activities, etc, need to be with the editorial team by the 12th of the month at the latest.

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ALL SAINTS CHURCH SERVICES MAY 2026

Date	Time	Event
Sunday 3rd May	11:00	Communion Service with Confirmation - Right Reverend Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford
Sunday 10th May	11:00	Family Worship - Caroline Coster
	18:00	Evensong (BCP) - James Beauchamp
Wednesday 13th May	19:30	Reading of Night Prayer - Sarah Tomlinson (Online only)
Thursday 14th May	19:30	Ascension Day Communion - Reverend Sarah Burrows
Sunday 17th May	11:00	Parish Communion with Baptism - Reverend Sarah Burrows
Wednesday 20th May	10:00	Holy Communion BCP - TBC
	15:30	Messy Church - Caroline Coster
Sunday 24th May	11:00	Parish Communion - Reverend Jennie Cappleman (Pentecost)
Wednesday 27th May	19:30	Reading of Night Prayer - Sarah Tomlinson (Online only)
Sunday 31st May	11:00	Parish Communion (Trinity Sunday) - TBC

Pastoral Care

Should you want to contact the Church about any matter or need a priest during the Vacancy, please contact the Church Wardens - Sarah and Alan

THE SKUNK AND THE FERRET

On a damp and moonless night in March, two small fugitives made themselves known to some of the residents in Green End Renhold. The first was a ferret-sleek, jittery, and confident. The second was a skunk, who moved with a slow, philosophical swagger and carried with her a reputation that preceded her by her scent. Their release had not been dramatic and, to this day, nobody knows from whence they came. Renhold at night was a place of quiet order—tidy gardens, sleeping dogs, and bins lined up like obedient soldiers. This order lasted approximately six minutes. Their first stop was the village green. Next came the bins. A light flicked on in a nearby cottage. "Did you hear that?" came a voice. The ferret froze, with his head stuck in a yoghurt pot. The light snapped off and our Ward Councillor, who just happened to be passing, set to work. The ensuing chaos attracted attention, and soon the village

was awake. Doors creaked open. Slippers shuffled. Someone shouted, "There's a weasel in my bin!" The pursuit began. The ferret ran-zigzagging across the green and down Woodfield Lane. The skunk strolled disdainfully, believing that her scent defence would keep any would-be captors well away. The crowd thinned quickly. Cornered near the village green by a determined Amazonian warrior, the ferret made a valiant last stand involving hissing, spinning, and an attempt to look significantly larger than he was. It did not work. With a swift and slightly embarrassed motion, he was scooped up. Meanwhile, the skunk reached the edge of the village, paused, looked back at the starlit sky, and, with the quiet dignity of a creature who knows her own mind, she slipped into the hedgerow and vanished into the night—free, undefeated, and very, very alone.

LETTER FROM RENHOLD CHURCH WARDENS

As we write this letter, we are just moving on from Holy Week, which culminated with Easter Sunday, when we celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has journeyed through Lent and Holy Week with us; especially to the many people who were involved in the services, decorating the Church and creating the Easter Garden at the front of the church – THANK YOU!

The next milestone in our Church Year is Ascension Day on the 14th May. Do join us for our service in the evening if you can.

On 26th April, we will have held our Annual Parochial Church Meeting where Churchwardens and PCC members are elected. Officers for the Church can be found on our Church Website.

As we reported last month, our search for our new incumbent continues. The first round of advertising did not result in any suitable applicants. The adverts will be reposted on the 13th April, so we hope to have news of new applications next month.

In the meantime, we continue to pray that the right candidate will apply, and we continue to hold our full schedule of services with the help of local clergy. This includes weddings, baptisms and funerals – as required.

On Sunday 3rd May, we are holding a Confirmation Service, officiated by The Bishop of Bedford. The five candidates from this Church have been on a journey of learning and exploration of their faith since January. This will be a very special moment for them. Please do join us for the service and support them.

A few dates for the diary! The Friends of All Saints' are putting on a Quiz Night on Friday 8th May at 7.00pm. Tickets are £15.00 each and includes a Fish and Chip Supper. There is space for a maximum of 10 teams of 4. Please contact the Churchwardens, if you haven't yet signed up.

On 27th June, we are hosting a presentation on the Wildlife of Renhold, hosted by Mr Tony Ploszajski, who features widely in this magazine. Watch out for posters and notices for further details.

Finally, you will see some changes in our Churchyard. This includes two benches in our new Green Garden of Remembrance; an area where ashes can be interred directly into the soil. We will once again have a wild flower area that will be left uncut, to encourage our bugs and bees to prosper and our wild flowers to grow. Look out for information of the species we have found there.

With every good wish,
Alan and Sarah

POETRY RENHOLD PLEASE

Simon Armitage - Poet Laureate

It is strange how sometimes things just seem to come together. I was looking for some lines of a poem to put beside a floral window display in church for VE Day and I came across a poem by Simon Armitage called "In Retrospect", which he had written to commemorate the 80th Anniversary, in his role as Poet Laureate Here are a few lines:

"The world asks a great deal of the poppies ...
We painted their flowers the colour of blood
and punched dark holes in their heads
as if bullets had passed through,
then trimmed them with green sprigs of hope."

It made a huge impression on me and I resolved to look up the poet with whom I was not familiar. A month later, I was walking past the Retirement Education Centre in Rothsay Road when I saw a pile of Spring Term brochures. Browsing through one later that evening, I spotted a course about the poetry of none other than Simon Armitage, and I signed up. Now I am totally hooked on "one of contemporary poetry's most essential voices".

Born and brought up in Yorkshire, he knew from early on that, for him, poetry was at the heart of everything. He has many themes – human relationships and connections, families, haunting memories where past actions torment the mind, loss and its impact and the natural world to name but a few.

In a short article I can only quote some examples, plucked at random, in the hope that they will demonstrate his ability to wrest vivid, startling images out of thin air and whet your appetite to explore his work some more.

Describing the mist that comes down over the Yorkshire moors – "the edge of your being will seep into its fibreless fur", or, writing about snow – "stars snag on its crystal points ... then it wakes and thaws and weeps ". Or what about this, possibly from his observations of people on the street or his time as a probation officer?

"It was his anorak that first attracted me.

The foam lining was hanging from a split seam
and a tear that ran the length of his back was patched
with Sellotape and sticking plaster.....

I passed by him, breathing in,
and he smelt like a wet dog drying."

Of loss comes the following:

"We walk to the ward from the badly parked car
with your grandma taking 4 short steps to our two.
We have brought her here to die and we know it."

Finally, an extract that captures the unfolding events of 9/11:

"You have picked me out
Through a distant shot of a building burning
you have noticed now
that a white cotton shirt is twirling, turning
In fact I am waving, waving
Small in the clouds but waving, waving
Does anyone see
a soul, worth saving?"

I hope you may have found something of interest here.

Details of Education Retirement Centre
Courses; 01234 302203
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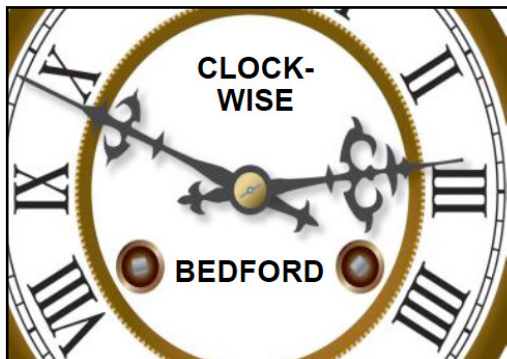
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RENHOLD SCHOOL INSPECTIONS 1911 – 1935

HOW TIMES CHANGE! PART 1; 1911 – 1925

Bedfordshire Archives has a scrapbook of cuttings of visits made to Renhold School by School Inspectors just before the First World War and through the inter-war years [ref: E/IN1/1].

The first report dates to 1911, when average attendance was 59. "Order is good and the School is doing creditable work; general improvement has been effected during the past twelve months. More intelligence is shown by the children, more active interest is taken in their work, and the Written Exercises are characterised by greater care...The few infants in attendance are suitably taught and are making satisfactory progress".

Two years later, the report was still positive "In spite of epidemic sickness, a thoroughly good year's work has been done and the general level of attainment throughout has been raised. Order and tone are praiseworthy and a good level of efficiency is reached in all sections of the school".

After the Great War, the first report was made in 1923: "A Head Teacher left in August 1920, at which time the School had fallen to a very low level. The discipline and attainments of the

children were both thoroughly bad. For the next eighteen months or so the school was in the hands of a succession of temporary teachers - five in all.

A new Head Teacher took charge in February 1922. "The discipline is now excellent, and the work, at least as regards Standards II-IV, is certainly improving, but naturally much still remains to be done".

Two years later, things were much the same: "The general condition of this part of the school [Standards II-VII] has not much changed since the last Report was made. As far as Standard I and the infants were concerned, however: "The work of Standard I is very satisfactory. The infants were nearly all absent on the day of inspection through sickness, but there is little doubt that they are well taught".

The school was visited again in 1923: "This school has made some progress since the last report...The school is, in fact, uneven, with the majority on the poorer side; but it is not felt that the Head Mistress is to blame, though it is hoped that she will be able to improve matters in the next 2 years".



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A QUICK FIRE THEOLOGICAL Q AND A WITH CANON LYNDA KLIMAS



You are a recent arrival at All Saints' Renhold. And you have arrived like a breath of fresh air! What first attracted you to come here?

"While I was Rural Dean of Ampthill and Shefford, I met Reverend Ian Smith. When I heard that he had been unwell, I offered to help. He welcomed me in March 2025 and I agreed to take some services."

Before your ordination, you worked in the Civil Service – how did that path lead you to the ministry?

"I worked for 10 years at the DHSS in Bedford and worked with single parent families. This gave me insight into how many people struggle to live on benefits, and pastoral visiting has been something I continue to value."

Looking back over your ministry, what keeps you encouraged and energised?

"My faith. If we all lived with Christian values, the world would be a better place."

How have you seen the role of parish priests change during that time?

"As fewer people attend church, the workload has increased."

You were among the first women ordained as a priest in 1994. How has that experience shaped

your ministry and perspective?

"I was among the youngest to be ordained in St Albans Abbey, but many women had been waiting years. The prejudice I faced simply because I was a woman made me more determined to stand up for those who feel marginalised today."

How did you feel when appointed Honorary Chaplain to the Queen?

"I was surprised to be chosen, but glad to accept the honour for my family, friends and my parishes. I am proud to preach at the Chapel Royal in St James' Palace once a year and I get paid for doing so!"

You have had the honour of meeting both the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh –why were those encounters so special?

"I met the late Queen when I was part-time chaplain at the hospice. I met the Duke of Edinburgh when I received my Gold Award at 21! They were both hugely warm and inspirational."

Have you met any other famous people?

"I was at theological college in Cambridge with Archbishop Justin Welby. The person who has inspired me most was Dr Alan Smith, The Bishop of St Albans. The love of God shone brightly in all that he said and did."

Finally, which of those talents or personality traits is most important to you?

"A sense of humour. When I was made Canon, Bishop Alan said that I take my faith seriously but myself not so much so!"



The Honorary Chaplain Brooch Given to Canon Lynda on her appointment to the late Queen (left)

GROWING THE GAME; INSIDE JUNIOR CRICKET AT WILDEN – ISABELLE SMITH

On Saturday 28th March, I spoke with Parm, a dedicated member of the cricket club in Wilden, to learn more about how the club is developing young players and building a strong community around the sport. At the centre of their efforts is a simple philosophy: introduce young players to cricket in a fun, supportive environment, while helping them to develop essential skills. Their All-Stars programme, aimed at children aged 5-8, runs on Saturday mornings from the 9th May, 10am-11am. The course costs £50 for 8-week sessions. This includes each child receiving an All-Stars T-Shirt - Backpack - Bat and Ball.

More details and bookings can be made through the official website: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars> or Parm Bhargal at parmb@hotmail.co.uk. It has seen strong participation, offering a welcoming first step into the sport.



Parm emphasised that Wilden's approach stands out for its smaller, more personal sessions. At present, sessions involve around 16 children, although numbers could expand with additional parent volunteers and in line with government guidelines. Activities range from basic cricket skills to creative indoor options when the weather is poor, ensuring sessions can continue whatever the conditions. Safety remains a priority throughout, and parents are actively encouraged to get involved, helping to build a strong sense of community around the club.



Parm and Isabelle Outside Wilden clubhouse (above)

Alongside its junior focus, the club also maintains strong ties with the adult game and local traditions. One highlight of the calendar is the Polden Cup, played on the August bank holiday between Wilden Cricket Club and Polhill Arms Cricket Club (both teams made up of volunteers). The current Holders of the cup are the Renhold team. The fixture offers a more social, community-driven side of cricket, bringing together players and spectators alike. Events like this, combined with an inclusive approach that encourages boys and girls to take part, reflect the club's wider commitment to making cricket accessible, enjoyable and firmly rooted in village life.

RENHOLD PARISH CLUBS 2026

Group	Contact	Tel.	Day	Time	Place
Bridge Club - No fear	David Israel	078166685798	Every Mon. & Fri.	9:45 AM - 1 PM	St. Marks Church Brickhill
Chapel Coffee morning	Albert Browning	01234772689	2nd Tues.	10 AM - 12 PM	Renhold Chapel
Creative Club	Teresa Trangmar	07788402441	2nd Monday	7:30 PM - 9 PM	Chapter House
Dance classes	Sarah Higgins	Sarahhiggins18 @yahoo.com	Saturday	9 AM - 10:30 AM	RV Hall
Football club	Mr K Harlow	01234 871178			
KT Yoga	Katy	0798552032	Every Thurs.	7 PM - 8 PM	RV Hall
Luncheon Club	Yvonne Potter	01234771495	2nd Wed.	12:30 PM for 1 PM	Call for information
Mini athletics	Ayrron Armstrong	07985 520232	Every Sun.	9 - 11:30 AM	RV Hall
Pudding club for carers	Anne Grant	01234771811	1st Tuesday	2 PM - 3:30 PM	4, Brookside
Reading group	Pauline Capell	01234771858	1st Friday	4 PM	1, Church Close
Renhold pre- school group	Samantha Grummit Lorna Millard	01234771724	Term time	9 AM - 3:30 PM	Renhold School
Stitchers	Jackie Croot	01234870271	3rd Thurs.	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Chapter House
Table tennis	Ian Smith	07989470093	Every Mon. Every Wed. Every Fri.	1:30 PM 10:30 AM 10:30 AM	Church Ln. Community Centre
Tang Soo Do	David Roughly	07591266614	Every Mon.	6:30 PM - 8 PM	RV Hall
Total Warrior Kickboxing	Dan Jackson	07450235946	Every Tues.	5:45 - 8:15 PM	RV Hall
Yarn Craft Group	Marion Sutton	01234217647	Alternative Fridays	10 AM - 12:30 PM	Wilden Village Hall

RENHOLD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE NEWS

The Renhold Women's Institute enjoyed a productive and uplifting evening at our recent meeting, which began with our Annual General Meeting. Members gathered to reflect on our past year's activities, celebrate our achievements and look ahead to the months to come. As always there was a strong sense of community spirit with lively discussion and support for the continued success for our institute.

Following our AGM we were delighted to welcome Yoga With Jackie, who runs a weekly class at the village hall, to instruct us all with some Chair Yoga for a relaxing and enjoyable session. The gentle movements and stretches

were suitable for everyone and there was plenty of laughter along the way. It was a wonderful opportunity to unwind together, and by the end of the session we all felt more connected, refreshed and pleasantly stretched.

Our next meeting will take place on the 7th May, when we will be joined by Gary Fisher, who will be giving us a talk on the Bayeux Tapestry- sure to be an interesting and informative evening.

Visitors are always very welcome, and we would love to see some new faces join us.

MEMORY CAFÉ 20TH MARCH 2026 – JANET GOODMAN

When I first started reading about the memory café, I often wondered what it was all about. How did it start? All I know is that there are a lovely group of volunteers who give up their time to help people to retain as much memory as they can, by way of quizzical exercises.

I went along to one of their cafés and I was amazed at the variety of exercises they undertook. I particularly like the 14 question grid on a paper asking questions like; Which famous person lives in Clarence House? The participants are paired off to answer all 14 questions using the 20 cards with the answers on.

Obviously there will be 6 cards left over just to make it interesting. It is surprisingly harder than it sounds. I will have to go back for a rematch!

For anyone struggling with memory loss this café or any one of Tibbs Dementia Foundation charity cafes/ Music groups amongst other things, are one of the best places to start looking for support in Bedfordshire.

For more information contact Teresa Moon Rural Communities Champion; 07930 999573
teresa.moon@tibbsdementia.co.uk

Office Contact Times:
Monday to Thursday:
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Please note that the office telephone is not manned on Fridays or over the weekend. Kindly leave a message, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

RENHOLD SCHOOL INSPECTIONS 1911-1935

HOW TIMES CHANGE! PART 2; 1925-1935

The next inspection was duly made two years later and found: "In this school a recent analysis by the Head Teacher showed that only 11 of the 48 scholars were not related to the others, of whom many were very closely related. The best work was done by one of these 11 children. The Head Mistress is absolutely honest. The school in fact is just below the normal - but the Mistress works so well that it would seem that the fault is more in the circumstances than in her - though more insistence on the children's working their hardest would possibly make a difference". The next visit came in 1930 when the circumstances regarding the pupils, naturally, still applied, however: "By organising trips the Head Mistress tries to enlarge their horizon and their written accounts of these show that the object is achieved. Some of these are really good". In summary the inspector wrote: "The tone and efforts for discipline are alike satisfactory".

The subject of the next visit, in 1933, was the school itself. Two matters required urgent attention, firstly heating: "An apparatus was installed on 17 September 1930. The boiler burst 7 October 1930. Repairs were effected at Xmas that year. The boiler burst again in the Spring of 1933. Plaster has fallen - and hit the Infants' mistress on the head, after vibratory noises in the pipe recently. The opinion of the Vicar, whom I met at the school, is that circulation has never been satisfactory... the

noises in the pipe and the falling plaster are certainly alarming".

The second matter was desks: "These are unsuitable for the largest children. A girl 12 years old is 5ft. 7: absent, in bed, visited twice weekly by the Doctor, for curvature of the spine from April 10 to 12 May. She has now to sit in a backless desk, not large enough for her. There are 6 pupils of 5 ft. 6, one a boy just 12, who are seated in the same circumstances. Two of them were measured at the visit; the account of the others was accepted as correct. In view of the probable growth of these children tables and chairs should be supplied".

The final report is dated 1935, when average attendance was 37. It is notably more upbeat than previously: "This small school is in the charge of a Head Teacher and one Supplementary Teacher. The atmosphere is very pleasant and, the younger ones particularly, speak freely and show no sign of shyness. The work is generally satisfactory and the teaching on sound lines. School journeys are undertaken with the help of the parents, in connection with Nature Study, Geography, History and English. It would be well, however, to make the fullest use of these journeys by training the children to keep notes and records... The Head Teacher takes a great interest in her pupils and is endeavouring to give them the type of training that will stand them in good stead all their days".

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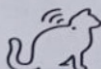
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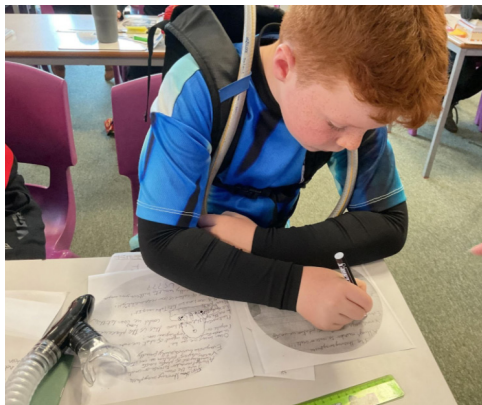
CELEBRATING WORLD BOOK DAY 2026

LISA LARHAM

Renhold V C Primary School enjoyed a wonderful week of activities leading up to celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 5th March. The week was filled with activities designed to inspire a love of reading, while also encouraging children to think about caring for our planet. This year's theme focused on environmental awareness and sustainability, inspired by the beautiful and thought-provoking book 'Mother Earth is Weeping' by Claire Donald. The story follows a worried Mother Earth who shares her concerns about the planet with the Moon and the Sun but ultimately finds hope in the children of the world – the "future guardians" of our Earth.



During the week, each class explored the story through art, writing and drama, creating their own page inspired by the book's powerful themes.



The children also had the opportunity to take part in the popular "Book in a Box" competition, decorating boxes to represent their favourite books, with prizes awarded at the end of the week. A second-hand book sale was held after school throughout the week to raise funds for new books for classroom reading corners and the school library.



On World Book Day itself, pupils enjoyed an Eco-Friendly Dress-Up Day, arriving dressed as animals, trees, gardeners and “Earth Protectors,” with many wonderfully creative costumes made from reused or recycled materials. You may even have spotted a David Attenborough walking into school, alongside buzzing bees, colourful butterflies, leafy trees, and a variety of woodland creatures.



There were also budding gardeners complete with watering cans, children dressed as the Earth itself, and a number of young environmental heroes proudly wearing green capes and recycled accessories.



The effort and imagination that went into creating costumes from everyday materials were fantastic to see, perfectly reflecting the week’s focus on sustainability and caring for our planet. The children recently took part in a whole-school read-along, where pupils had the opportunity to choose a story they would like to listen to and our Headteacher, Miss Larham, read to every class in the school in one morning, making the event even more exciting and memorable for everyone. A huge thank you to the children, their families, and the staff for making the day such a success.



We all had a fantastic time celebrating books, imagination, and the joy of reading together.

IN THE HOT SEAT – MARTIN DARLOW



Martin was born in Bedford and then lived and was educated in Potton and Sandy, leaving school at 16, with modest academic qualifications, owing to a greater focus on sport!

Martin and his wife Helen, moved to Embla Close in July 2003 with their sons George and Ally and Freddie, the family dog, who is often seen swimming in Renhold Brook. He also has a granddaughter, Nancy born last September. His sons now both live with their partners in Thurleigh and Reading respectively. He has no plans to move, given the spirited community and friendly culture of Renhold. Martin joined the Bedfordshire Police in 1979 at the age of 16, as one of the last cohorts of paid Cadets.

His greatest challenges and successes in his 32 year career were bringing justice to the victims and families of victims of murder and other major crimes. During his police career, Martin maintained his

focus on sport, playing football and cricket, at a high level and then officiating.

He became a Football League Referee and Cricket Umpire, and retirement enabled him to continue this passion where he became involved in sports governance and administration. He was appointed Chief Executive of Bedfordshire Cricket and merged counties to create Cricket East before being elected to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), where he became Deputy and then Chair. He represented the ECB on the International Cricket Council (ICC), travelling the world with the England team, attending global tournaments and meeting many legends of the game including Sir Garfield Sobers, arguably the greatest cricketer of all time. His greatest ECB moments were presenting the winners' medals to the England team at the T20 World Cup in Melbourne in 2022 and the silver bat at Edgbaston to Joe Root, celebrating his 10,000 runs.



Martin has used cricket to bring communities together and to develop young people. He was a Trustee of Chance to Shine and Capital Kids' Cricket and a Lord's Taverners' Director; charities using inclusive cricket programmes to develop and empower disabled, disadvantaged and/or vulnerable young people by providing an opportunity to engage, play and enjoy cricket - whatever their ability.

Martin was Chair of Governors at Renhold Primary for 6 years, standing down last July following a successful OFSTED inspection. He has also been Chair of Governors at Mark Rutherford and Alban Middle and there is no doubt that the communication, chairing and leadership skills acquired through policing, cricket and the charity sector have assisted him in supporting and driving school improvement in what is an excellent village school.

In May 2024, Martin was appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant, and he holds the Sports' Portfolio supporting the Lord Lieutenant Susan Lousada. This role entails connecting organisations to collaborate to enhance, improve and develop the sports' provisions and opportunities across Bedfordshire. It also includes overseeing Citizenship Ceremonies and representing the King at awards and Remembrance events.

Martin attributes his success to the support of his wife Helen who made all his achievements possible by raising the boys single-handedly when he was working long hours on police investigations. Since then, she has been by his side on global cricket business and latterly supporting him as a Deputy Lieutenant. Martin has no regrets, apart from wishing he had been able to spend more time with his family in the boys' early years.

As Martin moves on to the next phase of his life, he will continue as Chair of his beloved Southill Park Cricket Club and the East Beds Charity Cricket Shield. He will also assume the role of Bedford Park Rotary Club President in July. He has been elected as the Chair of the National Counties' Cricket Association and promoted to Umpire in the East Anglian Premier Cricket League. Life goes on...

MOBILE LIBRARY TIMES 2026

Location	Time	May	June
Renhold – Green End	10.00 – 10.15	12th 26th	9th 23rd
Lay-by – Salph End	10.20 – 10.35	12th 26th	9th 23rd
Renhold – Home Close	10.40 – 10.55	12th 26th	9th 23rd
Renhold – Ravensden Road	11.00 – 11.15	12th 26th	9th 23rd

**All information correct according to online calendar Bedford Borough Council website*

WARD COUNCILLOR UPDATE APRIL/MAY 2026

Funding for GP Surgeries Secured

In a major step forward for residents across Bedford Borough, the Council has secured significant additional NHS funding for new, modern GP surgeries in Great Barford and Wixams. For Wixams, up to £6.9 million has been approved, while Great Barford is set to receive £750,000. The funding assigned in the capital programme for Wixams has been reassigned to Bromham. This is a significant step forward, bringing both schemes closer to delivery, while easing pressure on other local funding sources. The business cases will now be updated to reflect the new funding, creating real momentum behind these important GP projects, which will be vital to these growing communities.

Unsafe bridge demolished to make way for a new bridge

Work to remove the unsafe Queen's Footbridge is now underway, marking an important step towards providing a safe replacement crossing for residents. The bridge was urgently closed in August 2025 after inspections found significant structural defects, meaning it could no longer remain in use on public safety grounds. Only £17,000 was spent on inspections, maintenance, repairs and assessments between 2010/11 and 2023, contributing to the bridge deteriorating to this unsafe point. Demolition started on 16th March 2026 and is expected to take around eight weeks, with signed diversion routes and advance notice in place to help minimise disruption.

Anti-social behaviour officers update

The Council has secured a £65,000 grant from Bedfordshire Police to fund additional anti-social behaviour officers in 2026/27. These officers will be out on foot in the town centre, helping to deter anti-social behaviour, support targeted action with partners, and provide reassurance to residents, businesses and visitors. These roles are fully covered by the grant, so this extra support comes at no additional cost to the Council's budget. This builds on the £96,000 in the

Council's budget to fund two additional Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers who can go anywhere in the Borough where the need for patrols and early intervention is greatest. Greatest need is based on Police and Council data showing where problems are happening most frequently, so please keep reporting issues to the police and Community Safety Team.

Flood Risk Management Update

Flood resilience has continued to improve across Bedford Borough, with only one property affected by internal flooding during Storm Claudia, and with fewer road and bridge closures this past year. The Council has improved flood warning signs, made road closure updates quicker and clearer, and strengthened how teams work together during bad weather so communities can get information faster.

Local community Flood Groups have increased to 11 groups across the Borough. They are supported by the Council with training, equipment and an extra £10,000 of grant funding for additional flood kits. The Council has also continued to check planning applications carefully to help make sure new development manages water properly and does not increase flood risk.

New domestic abuse strategy

The Council has introduced a new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026–2031 that sets out a clear five-year plan to strengthen the local response to domestic abuse. It aims to prevent abuse earlier, ensure victims and survivors can access the right help more quickly, improve partnership working across services, hold perpetrators to account, and support long-term recovery. The strategy is informed by local need, with survivor feedback at its heart, and places particular emphasis on recognising children and young people as victims in their own right. Overall, it provides a stronger and more joined-up framework to improve safety, support and outcomes for residents across the Borough.

Support for residents facing higher heating oil costs

There will be an additional £121,109 boost to the Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund to help households struggling with rising heating oil costs. This extra funding is especially good news for rural communities, where many households rely on heating oil and can be hit hard by sudden price rises. The Council has identified 549 Bedford Borough residents who rely on oil for heating and hot water, and targeted letters will be issued to help make sure support reaches those most in need. Eligible households will receive a fixed payment of around £220.

East Park Energy

Local councillors have continued to raise local concerns during consultation hearings on the proposed East Park Energy Solar Farm (17 th March 2026). Key issues include the impact of construction traffic on rural roads, day-to-day disruption for residents, and the combined effect of this scheme alongside other major projects such as Black Cat and East West Rail. Concerns have also been raised about the scale of the development and the amount of agricultural land affected. At the consultation hearing, councillors stressed the importance of ensuring local views are fully heard and that infrastructure impacts are properly addressed.

Household Support Fund changes

Support for families during the school holidays is changing, as the previous Government-funded (Household Support Grant) food voucher scheme has now ended. Despite this, the Council still provides robust support for eligible children and families in Bedford Borough. Children who qualify can access the Council's Easter Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides free holiday activities and a free hot meal at every session. Families facing genuine hardship can also apply to the Council for support through Local Welfare Provision

and Crisis Grants, which can help with essentials such as food, heating and items for children.

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

Bedford Borough Council is looking for more local families to foster, helping some of our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, supportive home environment. If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@bedford.gov.uk

Highways Update

A range of work continued across Bedford Borough highways with the team carrying out a significant amount of maintenance work. Highways officers attended 514 streets for carriageway pothole repairs and 7 streets for footway pothole repairs, with a further 236 streets attended for other maintenance works. The team also completed 1,203 highway safety inspections, cleansed 57 gullies, and carried out 49 street lighting works. Engineering works during the month included 8,526 square metres of carriageway resurfacing and patching, 182 square metres of footway resurfacing, 54 gully replacements, 60 metres of drainage pipe replacement, and 215 metres of kerb, channel and sett replacement. These are the kinds of routine but important works that help keep roads and pavements in a safe and usable condition. Alongside day-to-day maintenance, work also continued on longer- standing highways and development matters, including adoption-related work linked to sites such as Wixams, Stewartby, Freemans Common Brickhill and Land North of Bromham Road.

Thank you, I hope you find this new format interesting and useful,
Best wishes, Cllr Nicola Gribble nicola.gribble@bedford.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL APRIL UPDATE

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 10 DWELLINGS AT LAND EAST OF HOOKHAMS LANE

The Parish Council formal notification of this planning application after the publication of the April Parish Council Agenda: 26/00429/MAF Demolition of dwelling, formation of access and erection of 10 dwellings with associated roads, garaging and landscaping at Land East Of Hookhams Lane. It was discussed during the Parish Council meeting, and agreed that the Local Authority Planning Officer was to be contacted to seek a time extension for consultation comments to enable this application to be placed on the Agenda of the May Parish Council meeting. The Officer is on leave for a few weeks, so at the time of writing, it is not known if the Parish Council will be granted this extension. Parish Councillors have expressed concerns over aspects of the proposal. These comments will be collated and an objection will be submitted in time, if the Officer does not grant the comment extension. As always, members of the public are encouraged to engage in the public consultation, which is due to end on 23rd April.

As usual, if anyone is not able to meet that deadline, there needs to be a follow up with the Planning Authority directly to discuss comments being submitted after this date. All details relating to this application can be found on the Bedford Borough Council Planning portal page. To view the documents online, head to: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/search-plans/search-plans-how-find-planning-documents-and-applications>

You can search by location 'land east of Hookhams Lane', by parish 'Renhold' or by application number '26/00429/MAF' Please remember to submit any

comments you have to Bedford Borough Council via planning@bedford.gov.uk

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – LATEST REGARDING PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 49 HOUSES AT LAND AT TOP END

The Parish Council engaged a professional planning consultant, who collated a comprehensive objection to this planning application proposal of 49 units, including 17 affordable and 5 self-build, and custom-build plots, associated landscaping, drainage and related infrastructure, with all matter reserved except for access for Land at Top End. The Parish Council will continue to monitor this application very closely.

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE APPLICATION OUTCOME

Renhold Parish Council considered an application earlier on this year, 25/02485/COU Change of Use to a residential care home for 5 residents, staffed 24 hours a day by 8 members of staff at 30 Hookhams Lane. There was concern regarding insufficient onsite parking for the proposal that in turn would bring an increased highways' safety issue. Local residents expressed worry as well, so Borough Councillor, Nicky Gribble, asked for the application to be 'called in' to Planning Committee if the Officer was minded to approve the application. A number of local residents had also submitted comments on the application.

The Planning Officer did recommend approval of the application, so it was presented to the Borough Council's Planning Committee in February, where Nicky Gribble spoke on behalf of the Parish Council raising concern. The Parish Council had also contacted all members of the Planning Committee directly in advance of the meeting to share the local concerns.

The Committee deferred making a decision in February, so the application was presented and reconsidered at the March Planning Committee meeting, where local residents addressed members of the Committee to share their concerns. The Planning Committee voted and agreed that the application be refused. This is a good example of collaborative working when a local voice is listened to and is valued by the local planning process.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS - INFORMATION REMINDER WHERE TO FIND IT AND HOW TO ENGAGE....

There continues still to be a large number of planning applications being seen in the parish for a range of different proposals. Please remember that if you wish to view current planning applications, previous planning applications, see planning decision notices or submitted comments on any application, then all information is retained on the Bedford Borough Council Planning Portal, which has an enormous amount of resources available to you. For more information do head here: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications> It is really important for residents to engage with planning applications to ensure a local voice is heard, as this often brings local knowledge that the Planning Officer might not be fully aware of. So please do take a few moments to submit some comments and send them to planning@bedford.gov.uk

EAST WEST RAIL CONSULTATION EXPECTED SHORTLY

The Parish Council are aware that there is a public consultation due to be taking place that, according to East West Rail, will start during April. As always, the Parish Council will publicise the information, once received, across various local platforms and will, of course, place the Consultation on the Parish Council May Meeting Agenda so that the item can be discussed fully.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES REMINDER

The dates for the coming year ahead have been set. The Parish Council will continue to meet at Renhold Village Hall on Wilden Road, with everyone most welcome to attend. Meetings start at 7:00pm, and will be held on: 14th May (Annual Council Meeting), 18th June and 23rd July.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL – CONTACT DETAILS CHANGE

Please remember that everyone is welcome to contact the Clerk or any Councillors about local matters. The Parish Council are at present expecting to transition over to a new communication system at any moment, which will include a new Parish Council website and new Parish Council emails. Whilst it is hoped this transition will be as smooth and seamless as possible, there is always a possibility that there might be some unexpected situations that arise, which, please be assured, the Parish Council will be doing its utmost to keep to a minimum.

This is why for this edition, there is not a full list of contact details available as usual in the Magazine directory for individual Councillors, until the new emails have been fully set up and are operational. The new Parish Council website will be renholdparishcouncil.gov.uk and the new Parish Clerk email will be clerk@renholdparishcouncil.gov.uk Please remember the contact number for Lizzie is 01234 771702.

NORTH BEDS RAMBLERS MAY WALKS

Why not come and join us for a walk?
We walk every Saturday afternoon for approximately 6 miles and twice a month on Saturday mornings for approximately 12 miles. Or try our "Ramble" on the first Saturday morning of every month – these are slightly shorter, and a slower pace.

Contact; Margaret Sawyer 07780933729
Facebook; North Beds Ramblers

Please note change of start time for afternoon walks – Summer afternoons start at 13:30. Morning walks start at 10:00. For the summer we are introducing evening walks starting at 7pm.

For our latest walks program visit;
ramblers.org.uk/north-bedfordshire

May 2nd	"Ramble"
May 2nd	50th Birthday Walk No.5
May 7th	*NEW* Evening Walk 7PM
May 9th	
May 16th	
May 21st	*NEW* Evening Walk 7PM
May 23rd	
May 23rd	
May 30th	

AM Mowsbury Park Bedford	4.5 miles
PM Ashmead Road	7 miles
Evening Mowsbury	6.5 miles
AM Ivinghoe	10.5 miles
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RENHOLD CHAPEL

Chapel preachers for May 2026

Date	Time	Name
May 3rd	10:30	Mr S Guest
May 10th	10:30	Mr R Keech
May 17th	10:30	Mr R Copperwheat
May 24th	10:30	Mr S Elphick

We have had some lovely sunshine days at the end of March, with the temperature being higher than normal for this time of year. We have also experienced a cold wind coming down from the Arctic as we put our clocks forward - springing forward to welcome the official start of British summer and not falling back as we did in the autumn. Our focus over the last few days in our Easter services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, which were early this year, has been on remembering

in particular that our dear Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for all mankind.

On Good Friday, we were assured of an eternity in heaven with Him. On Easter Sunday, we worshipped Him and praised our dear Father God for sending His dear Son who was willing to come to earth to die for us all. May God bless us all as we look forward to summertime showing us God's wonderful creation.

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Churchyard Volunteers
Teresa Trangmar
07788402441

Churchwardens
Alan Bloomfield 01234 351162
Sarah Tomlinson 01234 347115
Renhold.rev@gmail.com

Lay Vice Chair
Alan Bloomfield

Secretary to PCC
Jill Burrows 07710228995

Treasurer
Andrew Coutts
Renholdtreasurer@gmail.com

Verger
Keith Timms 01234772605

Messy Church
Caroline Coster
carolinejcoster@gmail.com

Preschool Group
Sarah Grummitt 01234771724

Renhold Chapel
Albert Browning 01234 772689

Renhold School
01234 771724

Renhold Village Agent
0800 039 1234

Renhold Village Hall Bookings
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Women's Institute
Caroline McEwen 07545340209

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Borough Council
01234 267422

Borough Councillor
Nicola Gribble 07955530234

North East Bedfordshire MP
Richard Fuller 01767 313385

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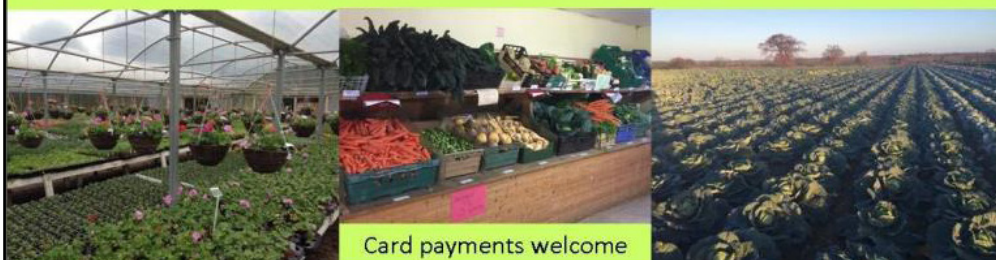
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