The Natterjack

SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION **2026**

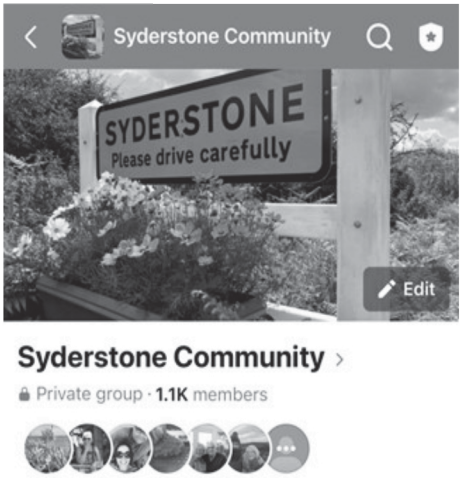


Welcome to the Winter edition of The Natterjack!

As another year draws to a close, we hope you enjoy catching up with the latest village news, local stories and events. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to The Natterjack throughout the year and helped keep our community connected.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Please contact: Sarah Harvey
Tel: 01328 823391 | Email: clerk@syderstone-pc.gov.uk
SPRING EDITION DEADLINE for contributions 25th January 2027



SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY FACEBOOK PAGE

Is a great way to keep track of what's happening and share information. Want to join?

You'll need the Facebook app on your phone or tablet then search for 'Syderstone Community'.

Simply apply to join (as it is a closed group) and just answer a few questions about your connection with Syderstone.

SYDERSTONE PARISH COUNCILLORS

Dawn Niemann - Chair	01485 576217
Simon Wood - Vice-Chair	01485 576297
Debs Candy	07951 317570
Dawn Harris	01485 578681
Andy Knight	07973 741098
Paul Welland	01485 576249
Parish Clerk: Sarah Harvey	01328 823391

Parish correspondence:
By post: Byanoak, Leicester Road, South Creake, NR21 9PW
Email: clerk@syderstonepc.gov.uk
Website: www.syderstonevillageandpc.info

Parish Council meetings - all take place at 7.30pm: The next meeting dates are, **10th December 2026, 21st January 2027 and 18th February 2027**.

At its meeting on 21st January 2027, the Parish Council will consider and agree its budget and precept (the amount collected through Council Tax to fund Parish Council services) for the forthcoming financial year.

Members of the public are welcome and there is an opportunioty to make comments or ask questions of the Council during the meeting.

For up to date information for meetings please visit the Parish Council website - www.syderstonevillageandpc.info

An update from Dawn Niemann, Chair of Syderstone Parish Council

It has been another busy few months for the Parish Council, with village improvements completed and progress on future projects. Here are some highlights.

Play Area – Thank You for Having Your Say!

A big thank you to everyone who took part in our community consultation on the future of Norman Way Play Area. We received 54 responses, giving us valuable feedback on what people enjoy about the existing facilities and what they would like to see improved.

The results showed strong support for replacing the ageing multi-play equipment, with 89% of respondents considering its replacement important and 74% favouring a larger unit offering more play opportunities.

There was also considerable support for making the play area more accessible and enjoyable for children of different ages and abilities, with 83% considering inclusive play important. Additional seating and picnic facilities were considered important by 65% of respondents, while 64% of those answering the relevant question supported including a shelter in a future improvement project.

It was particularly encouraging to see how much the play area is valued, with the zip wire and open space among the most popular existing features.

Following the consultation, the Council has agreed that replacing the multi-play equipment should be the main priority, with other improvements considered as funding allows.

A small working group has been established, and we have begun approaching playground suppliers to explore suitable equipment and indicative costs. We are also investigating potential grant funding, including the Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Infrastructure Fund.

There is still plenty of work ahead, but we hope to make good progress during 2027 and will keep residents informed as plans develop.

Road Safety and Highway Concerns

We continue to raise road safety concerns with Norfolk County Council Highways, particularly the missing road markings and damaged sign at the B1454 junction.

The lining works are now scheduled for the week commencing 30th November, weather permitting, and the damaged sign is to be inspected as a priority.

Our Speed Awareness Message (SAM) signs continue to remind motorists of speed limits, and consultation is ongoing regarding a proposed relocation of the SAM post from Tattersett Road to Ashside.

A Little Piece of Village History

An interesting piece of Syderstone's history has recently come to light concerning the lime tree near the village's 'Tommy' silhouette.

Historical research has confirmed that the tree was planted on 6th May 1935 by Walter Steward, then the village's oldest inhabitant, to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V.

The tree was originally surrounded by protective railings, which were subsequently removed. To recognise this little piece of village history, the Parish Council has agreed to place a commemorative plaque on the nearby bench.

Could you spare a little time to help? We are looking for a volunteer who would be willing to help tidy up and improve the appearance of the bench in the spring. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Parish Clerk. We would be very grateful for your help.

Looking After Our Village

Our autumn community litter pick took place in October, and we would like to thank everyone who helped keep the village looking its best.

We have also raised concerns with Freebridge Community Housing about uneven footpaths in Norman Way, where tree roots are lifting sections of the tarmac and creating potential trip hazards. We are continuing to seek updates on outstanding road surface repairs in the same area.

The Council has also been pursuing the replacement of the faded information panel at Syderstone Common with Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Syderstone's Community Emergency Plan

Did you know that Syderstone has a Community Emergency Plan? The plan is designed to help the village respond to serious incidents such as prolonged power cuts, severe weather, flooding or disruption to essential services. It sets out how the Community Emergency Group and local volunteers can help coordinate information, check on vulnerable residents and provide practical support alongside the emergency services.

Following a recent power cut in the village, questions were raised about when the plan would be activated.

The plan is not automatically activated for every short interruption to electricity supplies. Although it identifies extended power outages of 12 hours or more as a particular concern, activation depends on the seriousness of the situation and its impact on the community. An earlier response may be appropriate if vulnerable residents are at risk or significant disruption is anticipated.

The plan can be activated by the Community Emergency Coordinator, Parish Clerk or Parish Council Chair, either following a request from the emergency services or where there is a clear need for local support.

Depending on the circumstances, this could involve sharing important information, arranging welfare checks or opening a designated place of safety, such as the Village Hall.

We would encourage residents to make simple preparations for unexpected disruptions to essential services and to look out for neighbours who may need additional assistance.

Remember, if there is an immediate danger to life, always call 999.

Representing Residents' Interests

Alongside our village projects, the Parish Council has continued to respond to consultations on matters affecting our community.

These have included the Borough Council's emerging Local Plan, where we highlighted concerns about infrastructure, drainage, public transport, affordable housing and access to services in rural areas.

We have also submitted a response on the future of healthcare in Norfolk and Waveney, expressing concerns about delays to the replacement Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the importance of maintaining accessible healthcare for rural communities.

Parish Council Vacancy

We would like to thank Councillor Dave Daly, who has recently resigned from the Parish Council, for his contribution to the village, particularly his work maintaining and inspecting the play area.

His resignation has created a vacancy on the Council, and further information about filling the position will be made available through our usual communication channels.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who has supported village activities and community projects throughout the year.

We wish all residents a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

SYDERSTONE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Sarah Found – A Christmas Story

One of the delights of the village archives are the old newspaper stories about Syderstone. This is one of them.



It was the beginning of December 1941, in the second year of WW2.

A pet dog called Sarah had got lost on her daily walk at Hunstanton on a very foggy day.

Her frantic owner couldn't find her and contacted the local paper. Soon everyone in the area was looking for Sarah, a smooth terrier, but without success. For a few days she was occasionally seen round the town but she now mistrusted every stranger and would run away if any one approached her. Then no more reports were heard. Where was Sarah?

Three weeks later and only a few days before Christmas a kindly householder in far off Syderstone saw an unknown terrier looking like the missing dog, near their cottage. A tasty treat was offered and this time Sarah didn't flee and was quickly secured.

A phone call to the police and a letter to Sarah's anxious mistress resulted in a car rushing to the cottage and a knock on the front door.

"Sarah screamed with delight, almost hysterical with happiness. … the best Christmas present of all."

And may I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Michael Parker, (Chairman) Syderstone Local History Group
Email: michaelparker1@btinternet.com / 07805 894284

NEWS FROM ST MARY'S CHURCH

Details of all regular services can be found on the Creakes Benefice Calendar.

Our Carol Service will take place on Friday 18th December at 6.00 pm, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Everyone is very welcome to join us.

We are also hoping to hold a Burns Lunch in January, subject to sufficient support. Please look out for further details on the church noticeboard and in the Benefice Calendar nearer the time.

The PCC wishes everyone a very Happy Christmas, and we look forward to welcoming you to our Carol Service.

Contact details for the Rector, Churchwarden and PCC Secretary are as follows:

Fr Clive Wylie* - 01328 823293
Email: rector@creakesbenefice.org (*not available Mondays)

Church Warden Mr Paul Offord - 01485 578218
Email: pauljeanne@btinternet.com

PCC Secretary Mrs Julie Goddard - 07515 648928
Email: julia.a.goddard@gmail.com

Website: www.creakesbenefice.org

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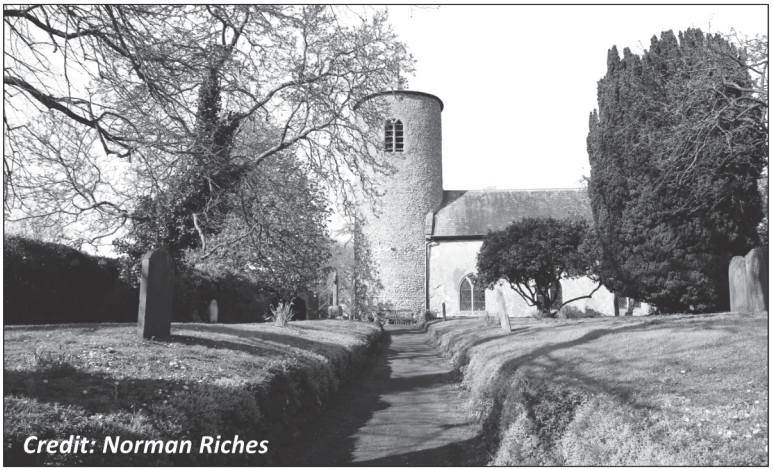

Credit: Norman Riches

AMY ROBSART VILLAGE HALL

Registered Charity No: 271842

The Amy Robsart Village Hall held a very successful 50th anniversary celebration on 26th September, which was well attended. During the celebrations, a portrait of the late Sybil, Marchioness of Cholmondeley, whose generosity enabled the purchase of the hall, was unveiled by her grandson, the current Marquess of Cholmondeley of Houghton Hall.



From left to right: Steve Kidd (Chair, Village Hall Committee), Marquess of Cholmondeley *and the Revd Clive Wylie. Photo credit: N Riches*

The Hall continues to thrive, with a busy programme of bookings and events. We are progressing with our air conditioning project and are currently awaiting planning permission from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Plans for the refurbishment of the kitchen are nearly complete, and we hope work will begin in the New Year.

Interested in Photography?

We would love to hear from anyone interested in forming a self-help photography group at the Amy Robsart Village Hall. The idea is to bring together people who enjoy photography, whatever their level of experience, to share ideas and learn from one another.

If you are interested, please contact Steve Kidd on 07772 613725.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone who uses, supports and helps keep the Hall running successfully a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Steve Kidd *(Chair, Village Hall Committee)*



SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUP

Winter/Spring term starts on Wednesday 6th January 2027 and we meet every Wednesday until 24th March, with a one week break on 17th February.

Meetings are held at the Amy Robsart Village Hall (1.45pm – 4.15pm). The term fee is £16.50 which includes refreshments.

New members are welcome. Just bring along whatever you're working on.

For more information contact **Jan Simkin** (*jansmkin@gmail.com*).

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE AMY ROBSART VILLAGE HALL?

You are very welcome to attend any of these by contacting the named person in each case. All our groups are friendly and inexpensive. They are places to make new friends and have a relaxed and enjoyable time.
See back page for village events.

COFFEE MORNING Contact: Julie Parker (07805 894284)	**Weekly** Wednesday 10.30 – 12.00
ARTS & CRAFTS Contact: Jan Simkin (0779 6164824)	**Weekly** Wednesday 1.45 - 4.15
VILLAGE HALL POST OFFICE Contact: Steve Kidd (07772 613725)	**Weekly** Wednesday 9.00 – 12.00
SYDERSTONE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP Contact: Michael Parker (07805 894284) Email: michaelparker1@btinternet.com	**Monthly – 1st Thursday** Thursday 7.30
SHORT MAT BOWLS Contact: Anita Taylor (01485 578524)	**Weekly** Tuesday 4.00—6.00

STANHOE & BARWICK WI - first Thursday afternoon of the month 2.00pm at Stanhoe Reading Room.

Have you ever wondered what happens at a modern WI? Why not join us at Stanhoe and Barwick WI to find out. Whether you're looking for friendship, informative speakers or visits to fascinating places, we have something for everyone. Visitors and new members are always welcome. (£5 fee for visitors includes refreshments).

Our next meetings include:

3rd December - A floral workshop run by Peg Hunter (members only).
7th January - 'Flying with the Red Arrows', a talk by Stewart Campbell.
4th February - 'Deepdale Farm - from village flooding to regenerative farming', a talk by Anna Biesty.

Why not come along and see for yourself? Visitors are always welcome.

Contact **stanhoebarwickWI@gmail.com** for more details.

BUS TIMETABLES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Planning a journey by bus? A free website called StopToStop makes it easier to find up-to-date bus timetables and departure information for Syderstone and the surrounding area.

The website brings together information about the bus services serving the village, including routes, destinations, bus stops and scheduled departure times. It also provides live departure information, helping passengers check when their next bus is expected.

Whether you're planning a shopping trip, visiting friends and family or travelling to an appointment, it's a handy way to check your journey before leaving home.

StopToStop uses official Department for Transport bus data, helping to keep information up to date as timetables change. Best of all, the service is completely free, with no adverts and no need to register or create an account.

Visit **https://stoptostop.co.uk/buses/syderstone** or simply scan the QR code below using your smartphone's camera to access the Syderstone bus information directly.

Old Syderstonians Reunion 3rd October 2026

A smaller than usual number of people attended the reunion, but a very convivial afternoon was had by all, with memories being shared over a cup of tea and the raffle was as usual a highlight of the afternoon.

The next reunion will be on Saturday 10th April 2027 at 2.00pm in the Amy Robsart Village Hall.

Shelia Riches: *sheilariches@btinternet.com / 01485 578171*

SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

I recently had a very interesting e-mail from a John Cubitt in Australia. His great grandfather was Arnold Joseph Cubitt, born in 1862 in Syderstone, son of Edward Cubitt and Susan Daws.

Arnold emigrated to Australia in 1887 sailing on the 'Duke of Argyll' which left London on 6th December 1887 and arriving in Maryborough, Queensland on 3rd February 1888. Before he left, Syderstone Sunday School presented him with a copy of 'Pilgrims Progress', with the following inscription. 'Presented with love and esteem with best wishes on his departure to Australia'.

Other Syderstone passengers on the same voyage as Arnold were Thomas and Esther Utteridge and their four children, Edward and Maria Graver and their daughter and Samuel Hipkin.

Arnold married Ellen Casey in 1893 and they had four children, Arnold was a Coachman / Porter and the family settled in Victoria, Australia and he died there in 1942.

John has very kindly donated photos to the archive of Arnold, Ellen, Edward and Susan Cubitt (nee Daws) and I have sent information on both the Cubitt and Daws families.

Mr Ward Liddle has acquired a photo of Mill Lane taken in the mid 1980's and details of his house which he bought at a similar time. If anyone else has historical photos of their road and/or house which they would like to donate to the Archive database please contact me.

Shelia Riches: *sheilariches@btinternet.com / 01485 578171*

SYDERSTONE MOBILE LIBRARY

Norfolk County Council's Mobile Library visits Syderstone on Fridays at: 14 Ashside: 2.10–2.20 pm and, Village Hall: 2.25–2.40 pm.

Remaining dates for 2027, following the January and February visits, are: 23rd April, 21st May, 18th June, 16th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 5th November and 3rd December.

For enquiries or timetable updates, call 01603 222303.

THE MYSTERY OF SYDERSTONE'S RECTORY GHOST

Dr Paul Lee explores a mysterious chapter in Syderstone's history that has attracted renewed attention in the pages of Fortean Times.

Did you know that Syderstone was once the subject of newspaper reports about a mysterious haunting?

During the 19th century, the rectory at Syderstone became something of a cause célèbre when the household of the Reverend Stewart was reportedly besieged by strange and unexplained noises.

The disturbances attracted considerable curiosity, with further inquiries suggesting that the mysterious happenings may have been occurring for many decades before they came to public attention. Remarkably, the reports suggest that the strange activity continued for some years afterwards before eventually fading away.



But what was behind these unsettling events? Was there a perfectly ordinary explanation for the noises, or was something altogether more mysterious taking place?

And, perhaps most intriguingly, who was the supposed ghost?

Could it have been Amy Robsart, whose name is so closely associated with Syderstone's history? Or was another ghostly presence believed to be responsible for the disturbances?

These are among the questions explored by King's Lynn researcher Dr Paul Lee in the December 2026 edition of Fortean Times, the magazine devoted to unusual phenomena, mysteries and unexplained events.

His article, 'In Search of the Syderstone Ghost', revisits the strange case of the rectory and explores other ghostly accounts associated with the village.

For anyone interested in Syderstone's past, it offers a fascinating glimpse into a rather unusual chapter of local history.

Further reading

Dr Paul Lee has also researched hundreds of other ghostly accounts from across the area, many of which are explored in his book, The Ghosts of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES THE POLICE CAN HELP WITH?

Every three months, the next being January, Parish Councillor Paul Welland attends the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) Priority Setting Meetings with the local Policing Beat Managers. The public meetings are arranged to discuss any issues or concerns residents feel should be brought to the attention of the police.

If you wish Paul to raise any issues on behalf of Syderstone residents, please let him know. Names are not divulged at the meetings, so anonymity is protected. Syderstone residents can contact Paul in the strictest confidence via email: cllr.paul.welland@syderstone-pc.gov.uk.

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NATURALLY SYDERSTONE - A Christmas Carol

Listen very carefully on a still, cold day this month and you may hear one of Britain's best-known songbirds performing, but ever so softly. The blackbird's normally loud, fluty and often melancholy-sounding song is one of the highlights of spring, but these birds don't turn in a perfect ten without some practice. Like most songbirds, the blackbird needs some rehearsal time, and so it engages in what is called sub-song on days when it has plenty to eat and time to spare for its craft. You might have to stand right up against the garden hedge to hear it, sotto voce.

But here's a thing. That blackbird which you saw all through the spring, summer and autumn may not be carolling *Silent Night*, but *Stille Nacht, Stilla Natt* or even *Jouluyö, Juhlayö*. That's because it's quite possibly not your Syderstone familiar. Our resident blackbirds are joined in autumn by an influx of more than a million birds escaping from continental Europe's harshest months. Scotland draws over a Norwegian contingent, while Norfolk's immigrants are crossing the North Sea from countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, southern Sweden and Finland.

At this point, the otherwise aggressively territorial birds declare a Christmas truce. Nobody needs a territory, because they're not yet breeding. And birds move around the countryside to find what they can get, whether it's a new crop of berries or invertebrates under piles of leaves. There's no clear ground to defend, so they don't bother.

We are not the only ones listening. Watch a blackbird in the local woods and copses and you might see it standing stock still, feet slightly apart, and tipping its head to one side. It's listening for creatures moving. A flick of a leaf and, ta-da, it's claimed its yuletide worm. Merry Christmas, nature lovers!



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WHAT'S ON .... events taking place through the month

Details of weekly events at the village hall such as Short Mat Bowls, Arts and Crafts and Coffee Mornings are not included in this list (see p.9).

DECEMBER			
3rd	Stanhoe & Barwick WI	2.00pm	Reading Room, Stanhoe
3rd	Local History Group	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
4th	Mobile Library	2.10 - 2.40pm	Ashside / Village Hall
5th	Quiz Night with Charity Raffle	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
10th	Parish Council Meeting	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
18th	Carol Service	6.00pm	St Mary's Church
JANUARY			
7th	Stanhoe & Barwick WI	2.00pm	Reading Room, Stanhoe
20th	Tech Skills for Life	10:30 to 12noon	Village Hall (ARVH
21st	Parish Council Meeting	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH
29th	Mobile Library	2.10 - 2.40pm	Ashside / Village Hall
FEBRUARY			
4th	Stanhoe & Barwick WI	2.00pm	Reading Room, Stanhoe
4th	Local History Group	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
6th	Quiz Night with Charity Raffle	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
18th	Parish Council Meeting	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
26th	Mobile Library	2.10 - 2.40pm	Ashside / Village Hall

