

The Natterjack



SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION

2026



Credit: Norman Riches

Welcome to the Spring edition of *The Natterjack*!

As always, The Natterjack shares village news, events, and stories, helping to keep our community connected through the seasons. Proudly funded by the Parish Council, it's *your* newsletter — so if you have any local news, memories, or updates to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Please Contact: Sarah Harvey

Tel: 01328 823391 | E: clerk@syderstone-pc.gov.uk

SPRING EDITION DEADLINE for contributions 11th May 2026



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'.

Syderstone Community >

Private group · 1.1K members



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
Dave Daly – Vice-Chair	01485 576222
Debs Candy	07951 317570
Andy Knight	07973 741098
Paul Welland	01485 576249
Simon Wood	01485 576297
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, **16th April and 21st May.**

Please note that on 21st May, the Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.00pm, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at approximately 7.30pm.

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

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

An update from Dawn Niemann, Chair of Syderstone Parish Council

Parish Council Vacancy – Co-option Opportunity

The Parish Council is now in a position to fill the current vacancy by co-option and would warmly welcome applications from anyone interested in getting involved.

Being a Parish Councillor is a rewarding way to support the village, contribute to local decisions, and help shape the future of the community. No previous experience is required — just an interest in the village and a willingness to take part.

The deadline for applications is 13th April.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or requested by emailing the Parish Council. If you would like to find out more about the role, please do get in touch — we would be very happy to have an informal chat.

Speed Awareness Sign

Following the fault identified with the Parish Council's existing SAM2 speed awareness sign, a bid was submitted in December to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme to secure funding towards a replacement unit.

We are very pleased to confirm that the application has been successful, with 50% of the cost being met by Norfolk County Council. In addition, the County Councillor has kindly contributed £700 towards the Parish Council's share.

The Council will now be purchasing a new SAM3 speed awareness sign, which represents a significant upgrade. The new unit will be solar powered, improving efficiency, reducing maintenance, and offering a more environmentally friendly solution.

As well as displaying vehicle speeds to encourage safer driving, the SAM3 provides enhanced data collection, including information on traffic speeds, volumes and peak times. This data can be used to support future traffic management and road safety initiatives in partnership with the Police.

Village Noticeboards

The Parish Council is currently preparing an application for funding to assist with the cost of replacing the village noticeboards.

The existing boards have served the community well for many years and have been carefully maintained, including by former members of the Parish Council whose time and dedication has been greatly appreciated.

However, due to their age and ongoing wear, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep them in good condition. Replacing the noticeboards will help ensure that important information can continue to be shared clearly, safely and in a way that reflects the village. The Council will seek to secure external funding wherever possible and will provide an update in due course.

Village Sign – Norman Way

Residents may have noticed that the village sign at the junction of Norman Way and Mill Road has been out of position for some time.

The sign has not gone missing — it was removed as a precaution after the supporting wooden post was found to have deteriorated and was no longer safe. A new steel post has already been prepared, and the sign will be reinstated once the remaining section of the original post has been removed.

This has proved more complex than expected, as the lower section of the post, set within a concrete base, remains extremely solid. It is also understood that the sign was originally installed differently to the other village sign in the parish, with the post fixed in place before the surrounding stonework was built, which has added to the difficulty.

A number of attempts have been made, with significant time and effort already invested by volunteers, and further work is ongoing. The Parish Council is very grateful for residents' patience, and particularly to the volunteers assisting with the work and safely storing the sign in the meantime.

As with all Parish Council activities, this work is being supported by volunteers, including councillors, whose time and effort is given freely for the benefit of the community.

Community Speed Watch

The Parish Council would like to thank our Community Speed Watch volunteers for their continued commitment to helping keep our roads safe. Their time and effort make a real difference in encouraging safer driving within the village.

It is disappointing to note that, on a small number of recent occasions, volunteers have experienced aggressive behaviour from motorists. This is completely unacceptable. Our volunteers are simply giving up their time to support the safety of the whole community and should be treated with respect.

The purpose of Community Speed Watch is not to “catch people out”, but to act as a visible reminder to slow down and drive responsibly. It is about prevention, not enforcement. Safer speeds help protect everyone—residents, pedestrians, cyclists, and visitors alike.

We would ask all road users to be mindful of their speed and to support the scheme. After all, the safety it promotes benefits us all—and if you are driving within the limit, there is nothing to be concerned about.

Thank you again to our volunteers for their ongoing efforts.

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SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

There is an increasing interest in the history of the houses in Syderstone.

I have taken a special interest in Webster's Yard and have started to compile data from after 1881 when it was first known as Webster's Yard, onwards to the present day. There are lots of gaps to fill!!

Ken Edge lived at what is now No.1 (no houses had numbers in 1948) with his father Hubert Francis (Frank) and stepmother Ida Edge (formerly Allen) nee Skipper and his stepbrother Colin Allen, from Easter 1948- February 1960.

He has kindly written his recollections of life there during that time and donated them to the archive.

Anyone who lives or has lived there in the past or anyone who can shed light on the houses and their inhabitants of this interesting yard. Please get in touch.

Sheila Riches: *sheilarriches@btinternet.com / 01485 578171*

STANHOE METHODIST CHURCH

We were very sorry to have to announce that Stanhoe Methodist Church, founded in 1892, closed at the end of February. The congregation had become too small and most of our remaining members were becoming too elderly and frail to keep it going. The Methodist Church does not allow churches with a membership of fewer than 12 members to continue as an independent congregation, and it was not feasible to join with another church in the circuit due to the travelling distances involved.

Our final regular morning service was held in mid-February and was conducted by our minister, Rev. Dr. Richman Ncube, as a Methodist Covenant Service with Holy Communion.

A Thanksgiving Service was also held in March to celebrate the life and work of the church over the past 134 years.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the church over the years.

NEWS FROM ST MARY'S CHURCH

On Good Friday 3rd April 2026 the Pilgrims from the Ely leg will attend a Service at 10 am followed by Hot Cross Buns and drinks in the Amy Robsart Hall. Everyone is welcome both at the Service and afterwards in the Hall. It is quite a sight to see them all coming up The Street, singing and carrying the Cross. Please support them if you can.

We are having a Spring Fair on 16th May 2026 from 10.30am to 2.30pm in the Amy Robsart Hall. Look out for posters nearer the time. Any offers of help on the day will be much appreciated. Please contact Julie Goddard on 07515 648928 if you are able to help.

Details of our regular services and events are all on the noticeboard outside the Church and in the Benefice Calendar.

Website **www.creakesbenefice.org**

For information:

Fr Clive Wylie* - mobile: 07480 065 063

Email: rector@creakesbenefice.org (*not available Mondays)

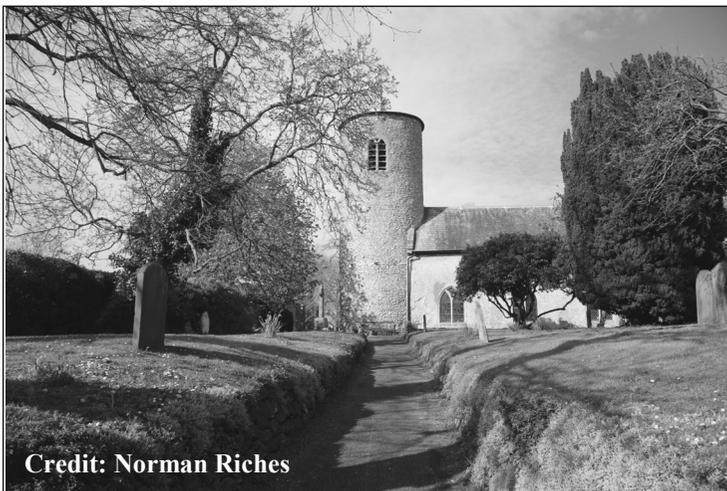
Church Warden Mr Paul Offord - 07443 873 686

Email: pauljeanne@btinternet.com

PCC secretary Mrs Julie Goddard - 07515 648928

Email: julia.a.goddard@gmail.com

**Serving the communities of Barmer, Blenheim Park, Syderstone
& Wicken Green**



Credit: Norman Riches

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

Have you ever wondered what goes on at a modern W.I? Here at Stanhoe and Barwick WI - whether you are into crafts, cookery or even campaigning, whether you're looking for friendship, fun or fascinating speakers - we have all that and so much more.

Our next few meetings include:

2nd April – *Medical Detection Dogs* (Richard Digby and David Soanes)

14th May – *Owl Rescue* (Simon Smith)

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

Contact stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com for more details.

PILATES AT AMY ROBSART VILLAGE HALL

Pilates sessions will be starting again at ARVH, and everyone is welcome to join.

Sessions will run on Mondays: **30 March; 13, 20 and 27 April; 11 and 18 May** (*excluding Bank Holidays*). There will be two 50-minute sessions each evening at **5.00pm** and **6.00pm**.

Fees: £6 per session (drop-in) or £30 for all six sessions.

The sessions will focus on stretching, toning and relaxation.

If you have any questions or would like to book a place, please contact Sally on **07837 752163** or by email at sallyastorr@gmail.com.

SYDERSTONE COMMUNITY ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUP

Summer term starts on Wednesday 15 April 2026 (1.45pm – 4.15pm) and we meet every Wednesday until 15 July, with a one week break on 27 May.

Meetings are held at the Amy Robsart Village Hall. The term fee is £19.50 which includes refreshments.

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

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

AMY ROBSART VILLAGE HALL, SYDERSTONE

Registered Charity No. 271842

100 Club – Renewal Reminder

A reminder that the new year for the 100 money club starts in April. Renewal letters have been sent out and members wishing to renew should return their form with payment by **25th March**.

We already have a few numbers available for new members. Anybody wishing to join should contact me, Steve Kidd, on **07772 613725**, and available numbers will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Booking the Hall

If you are interested in booking the hall please contact **Martin Bateman, Bookings Manager (07970 128 411)**.

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: Anita Taylor (01485 578524)

Weekly

Wednesday 10.30 – 12.00

TECH SKILLS FOR LIFE

Drop in session for technology advice/help

Monthly - 3rd Wednesday

10.00 – 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 9.15 – 12.00

SYDERSTONE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Contact: Michael Parker (07805 894284)

Email: michaelparker1@btinternet.com

Monthly – 1st Thursday

7.30

SHORT MAT BOWLS

Weekly

Tuesday 4.00—6.00

SYDERSTONE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

“The Limit” – When the railway came to Syderstone

It is a surprise to some people that for nearly fifty years there was a railway carriage in Syderstone, even though there was no railway line. This is its story.

In the 1920s land was relatively cheap but houses were expensive so the Couzens family came up with a clever idea for a house. They bought a plot of land on the edge of the village and then bought an old railway carriage to live in.

It must have been an extraordinary site to see a great big lorry and trailer with a railway carriage on lumbering along the narrow roads to the village, where it was unloaded. The Couzens moved in and named their new house “The Limit”.



The carriage was divided into two with bedrooms at one end and a living room and kitchen at the other. Later a further bedroom was built at the other end of the carriage. Over time it looked a bit tired and was painted and apparently even covered in pebble dash.

After living there for several years the Couzens left and several families lived at The Limit, including all through WW2. Eventually after fifty years the owners decided to sell the carriage. It was bought by some Norfolk steam railway enthusiasts and once again the carriage was lifted off the ground by a crane and hauled away on a large truck.

A new house was then built to replace it and named “Carriage House”. A fitting reminder of Syderstone’s railway age.

Michael Parker, (Chairman) Syderstone Local History Group

Email: michaelparker1@btinternet.com / 07805 894284

WOMACK WOOD

Starting way back in time, the area that comprises Womack Wood was heathland. During World War II the area was brought into agricultural production and it remained so until about 2002 when Catherine Ringer started the transformation into the planted area that is now so aesthetically pleasing. The wood has been designed around the three bronze age burial grounds and encompasses the public footpath and the permissive paths added over the years since. This enables walking amongst the trees rather than just around the perimeter, which we trust local people and dog walkers enjoy. Robinson Farms have now taken over the stewardship of Womack Wood.

The intention is to largely retain the wood in its current form, to do this we are initiating a work programme (over a period of 3 to 4 years) starting shortly. The plan is to trim back some of the paths allowing easier access and allowing more light in some places so the different species may thrive. Unfortunately this may look a little ugly in the short term but we believe this will improve the Wood and associated wildlife for the future and should also make mechanical maintenance easier.

You are welcome at all times, but please take great care when work is in progress. Please use alternative paths to avoid those at work and keep dogs strictly on their leads, at such times.

M.I.Robinson

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

Norfolk Community Fund – Offers **grants up to £2,500** for community-led projects such as village events, arts activities, and wellbeing or environmental initiatives. Find out more or apply at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/norfolk-community-fund

For advice, contact **County Cllr Michael Chenery**
michael.chenery.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk | 07920 286638

BCKLWN Councillor Community Grant Scheme – Provides **£50–£1,000** for small, community-based projects such as play area improvements, village celebrations, or wellbeing activities.

Apply online: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/community_grants

OLD SYDERSTONIANS REUNION

2026 marks our 20th Anniversary. The first proper reunion was on 1st July 2006.

We did not envisage that 20 years later the reunions would remain solidly supported by so many founder attendees, together with new people, who still coming to enjoy our entertaining and informative afternoons.

On behalf of Avril and myself I would like to thank everyone for their support, information, amusing stories, and incredible memories over the years, also our helpers on the day or behind the scenes who make things run smoothly.

It was from these first reunions that the Syderstone Community Archive was born. An ever-increasing interest in their family histories, photographs, memorabilia etc has resulted in an enormous collection of material which is housed in the ARVH.

We would love to see you all at the next reunion which is on 11th April 2026 2pm in the ARVH. Everyone welcome.

Sheila Riches: *sheilarriches@btinternet.com / 01485 578171.*

RAF BIRCHAM NEWTON HERITAGE CENTRE – Open Days 2026

The RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre will once again open its doors throughout 2026, offering visitors the chance to explore the history of the former RAF station.

Open days run from **Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday)** to **Sunday 8th November (Remembrance Sunday)**, with opening hours from **10.00am to 4.00pm.**

Regular Sunday openings take place from April to October, with an additional Bank Holiday opening on **Monday 31st August.**

For further information, please visit the Heritage Centre's Facebook page (search *RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre*).

For enquiries, contact **Jamie Heffer** on **07807 098348** or email **jamie_heffer@hotmail.co.uk.**

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NATURALLY SYDERSTONE - Nesting time

Here's a wild riddle – when is a hole a box? For the intended target, the answer is irrelevant. A female blue tit does not know that the circular entrance is not natural, cares little for the rectangular interior, more straight-sided than any tree. Blue tits are probably more likely than any other garden bird to use a nestbox and if you are lucky enough to have a pair in residence, you're in for a treat.

It's too late to put a box up for this year. The birds paired up in early February and picked their nesting site, where the female is now probably close to finishing her nest. She's looking initially for moss (plenty of that after the winter we've just had) to make her cup, then feathers, sheep's wool, fluff and hair to give a soft lining for her eggs. She will probably lay one a day until she has her full clutch – usually between 8 and 10. She won't spend much time at all around the nest around this time – a matter of in, lay, off. But you might just see her early in the evening or the morning scabbling about on the ground. What's she doing there? The answer is simple – she's looking for snail shells, so that she can get the calcium she needs to make her eggshells. Think how much she must need to cover 10 eggs!



Crucially, she won't start incubation until she has laid her clutch, so that they all hatch at the exact same time. It's quite likely that your garden blue tit's eggs will hatch in early May and the male joins his mate to feed the chicks up to a thousand meals a day for about a fortnight. No wonder most blue tits don't live more than a couple of years!

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Tel: **01485 576222**

1 Mill Lane, Syderstone

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).

APRIL

2nd	Stanhoe and Barwick WI	2.00pm	Reading Room, Stanhoe
2nd	Local History Group	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
3rd	Good Friday Church Service	10.00am	St Marys Church/ARVH
11th	Old Syderstonians Reunion	2.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
13th	Pilates	5.00 & 6.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
16th	Parish Council Meeting	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
20th	Pilates	5.00 & 6.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
24th	Mobile Library	2.10 – 2.40pm	Ashside / Village Hall
27th	Pilates	5.00 & 6.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)

MAY

7th	Local History Group	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
11th	Pilates	5.00 & 6.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
14th	Stanhoe and Barwick WI	2.00pm	Reading Room, Stanhoe
16th	Spring Fair	10.30 - 2.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
18th	Pilates	5.00 & 6.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
21st	Annual Parish Meeting	7.00pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
21st	Parish Council meeting	7.30pm	Village Hall (ARVH)
22nd	Mobile Library	2.10 – 2.40pm	Ashside / Village Hall

