

Spratton
Parish Newsletter
Spring 2025

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

SPRING 2025

Cllr Jane Marshall



At this time of year, with snowdrops in bloom and other signs of spring, there is a sense of renewal after what has seemed a long winter.

Local elections 2025

Elections for both West Northamptonshire Council and the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 1 May 2025. It is an 'all out' election meaning that all seats in both Councils are up for election. In West Northamptonshire, 76 councillors will be elected to represent 35 wards. Spratton is part of Naseby ward.

There are 10 seats on the Parish Council and an election will only be held if there are more candidates than places. If fewer than 10 nominations are made, candidates will be automatically appointed. The Notice of Election will be published on Friday 14 March 2025. If you intend to stand, you will need to submit a nomination paper, which must be delivered to Council offices in Northampton. **Nominations can be delivered after 17 March, with a deadline of 4pm on Wednesday 2 April 2025. If you are interested in standing, please contact the Clerk who will supply nomination papers and explain the process.** *clerk@sprattonpc.org.uk*

I do hope there will be more candidates wanting to join the Parish Council. With a full Council we can do more for the village.

Reviewing Council objectives and priorities

Our website sets out the Council's objectives or mission statement for the village, together with a business plan to put them into practice. They are an easy read. Do go and look at them if you have a moment. At our last meeting, it was decided that we should review these and identify priorities within the broader framework. The new Council in place after the May elections will have its own views but can build on the work being done now. An important first step is to gather feedback from residents; the **Annual Parish meeting to be held in April** is an opportunity to share your views on what is important for the village. We hope to see you there**.**

Road Traffic concerns-A5199

Concern has been expressed about the new signage which has been erected at the new road layout at the southern end of the A5199 on the edge of Kingsthorpe. The signage directs road users to access the M1 North, M6 and A14 via the A5199. The potential effect could be to increase the volume of traffic through Spratton, Chapel Brampton, Creaton and Thornby. Stephen Crane, Chair of Chapel and Church Brampton, kindly explained the background to the issue at our last Parish Council meeting. We have joined the three other villages in asking for the signage to be removed.

Cemetery access

Recent discussions took place on 27 January regarding the long-standing dispute over access to the cemetery and associated issues. Spratton Parish Council believed that a mutual understanding was emerging as a constructive way forward. In support of this we proposed a joint statement, reflected in a draft sent to Mr Matts on 6 February, as a framework for resolving these issues collaboratively and had prepared draft resolutions for the next Parish Council meeting. We had hoped to circulate the agreed position in this newsletter but have not to date been able to agree the statement with Mr Matts. We remain optimistic and will continue to work hard to ensure that residents have the access to the cemetery that they expect for the benefit of all in the village. We will keep residents informed of any further developments.

Highways matters

These continue to attract complaints on matters such as potholes, blocked drains and overhanging vegetation. These are not things that the Parish Council can resolve. Residents are reminded that the best way of reporting such matters is by using Fix My Street *https://fixmystreet.northamptonshire.gov.uk*

Cllr Jane Marshall jane.marshall@sprattonpc.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Tuesday 18 March 2025 7pm

Tuesday 15 April 2025 7pm

Tuesday 20 May 2025 7pm

Members of the public are welcome to attend. Agendas and Minutes will be on the website *www.sprattonpc.org.uk* All meetings in the Village Hall 7—9 pm

Your Chance to Make a Difference in Spratton

Parish and Local Elections 2025

This May presents an opportunity for residents of West Northamptonshire to vote in the local elections on 1 May 2025. Among these contests, the Spratton Parish Council election holds particular importance for our community. It's not just about casting your vote—it's about actively shaping the future of Spratton.

Spratton Parish Council plays a vital role in local decision-making. It oversees development by reviewing and commenting on planning applications, manages local amenities, supports the community and local organisations, and maintains our green spaces. The work of the council directly affects the quality of life in our village, ensuring that our heritage is preserved while fostering a vibrant, forward-thinking community.

If you care about making a difference in your neighbourhood,
consider standing as a candidate for Spratton Parish Council.
For more information, please visit:
www.westnorthants.gov.uk/electoral-services/local-elections-2025

Make your voice heard—stand for Spratton and help us make a real difference.

Alan Youel, Parish Clerk 07715 651904 clerk@sprattonpc.org.uk

Spratton Parish Councillors

Cllr Jane Marshall (Chair)	jane.marshall@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Ruaraidh McDonald-Walker	ruaraidh.mcdonald-walker@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Lydia Crawford	lydia.crawford@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Stephen Hole	stephen.hole@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Tom Beynon	tom.beynon@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Sharon Scanlan	sharon.scanlan@sprattonpc.org.uk
Cllr Gary Ashton	gary.ashton@sprattonpc.org.uk
Alan Youel (Parish Clerk)	clerk@sprattonpc.org.uk
07715 651904	PO BOX 821, Banbury OX16 6UB

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SPRATTON TOWN AND CHARITY LAND

Vacant plots

We currently have several full and half plots available.

If you are interested and would like to know more about renting and cultivating a plot, one of our Trustees, Frances Roseblade, would be happy to show you around and explain the advantages of growing your own vegetable, fruit, flowers etc. Now is a great time to take on an allotment and get it ready for the growing period.

Currently the rents are £40 p.a. for a full plot and £20.00 p.a. for a half plot. A plot taken now would be at half these prices until the rent renewals in September.

Please contact the Clerk if you are interested in talking to Frances.

Grants

The Trustees were pleased to receive letters of thanks from village organisations and students who received grants in December 2024. The amounts received were much appreciated.

Pat Parish – Clerk, 1 Gorse Road, 01604 847734,
parishpat79@gmail.com

The Kings Head Spratton



March 13th Spanish Food and Wine night

March 30th 3 sittings for Mother's Day

April 17th Australian Food and Wine Night

April 20th Easter Sunday

01604 847351 ***www.kingsheadspratton.co.uk***



A message
from
The Reverend Allison Twigg

As I write this, my thoughts turn to preparations for Lent and Easter. Lent, a significant season in the Church's calendar, mirrors the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, as described in the Bible. It is a time of reflection and preparation—an opportunity to pause, look inward, and engage in a kind of spiritual and mental spring cleaning. Symbolically, the Church embraces simplicity and solemnity during this time, removing flowers and decorations and streamlining parts of the liturgy to help us focus on Jesus' ministry and suffering. For me, Lent always deepens my appreciation of the joy of Easter when it arrives.

Many of you will know that in the early Church, Lent began after Shrove Tuesday—better known today as Pancake Day. This was traditionally a time to clear the larder of fats and sugars, marked by a feast before entering the simplicity of Lent. Over time, this practice evolved into the custom of giving up indulgences like chocolate, biscuits, or alcohol. A few years ago, I reconsidered my own Lenten practice. I realised that giving something up—didn't necessarily bring me closer to God. Instead, I decided to take something on: reading a book, joining a Lent study group, or engaging in a spiritual discipline that would enrich my faith.

This year, during Lent we will be studying together, learning through The Prayer Course. All are welcome to join in with this – please email *revallisontwigg@gmail.com* for more information.

Additionally, there will be an **Ash Wednesday service on March 5th at 9.30am**, where you will have the opportunity to receive the mark of the cross on your forehead as a sign of Lenten observance.

Lent also carries with it the quiet promise of spring. As the season unfolds, snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils begin to break through the soil, adding splashes of colour to our winter-weary gardens. Their emergence is a reminder that new life is on the way.

As Lent begins, I pray that we all find moments to pause, reflect, and perhaps do a little spring-cleaning in our own lives—preparing our hearts for the glory of Easter.

With prayers for you all,

Reverend Allison

Church Services in St Andrew's Spratton

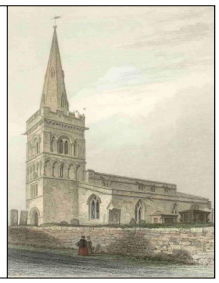
1st Sunday of the month	11.00 Worship for All—A family friendly service
3rd Sunday of the month	8.30 BCP Communion—a quiet, traditional service
4th Sunday of the month	11.00 CW Holy Communion with hymns
Also	
Wednesday 5th March	9.30am Ash Wednesday service
Sunday 11th May	Annual PCC Meetings to be held at Group Service at Guilsborough Church

http://www.uplandsgroupchurches.org.uk

St Andrew's Heritage Society, Spratton

(formerly the Friends of St Andrew's Church, Spratton)

Fundraising for a new 5 year maintenance and restoration programme



Organ repairs

We are pleased to report that the organ repairs were successfully completed in time for Christmas.

We have met our targets for fundraising, and we sincerely thank all those who contributed so generously.

We also recognise the support of the PCC Insurers, Ecclesiastical Insurance, part of the Benefact Group, who have been more than helpful in our time of need.

There is a finishing touch to the internal heating system electrics still to be carried out, which is a protective measure to keep the dampness away, but the low voltage heaters are already in place and working.

We are planning to hold a celebratory **'organ recital'** event soon when, whilst showcasing our historic instrument with its new found vigour and enjoying music and refreshments, we will also install a plaque with the names of all our donors within the organ frame.

More information about this important event will be forthcoming in due course. If there are any local organists or budding organists out there who would like to be part of an informal concert, we would love to hear from you.

Bill Blowfield (07887 510520) & David Bennett (07962 231798)
Chair & Treasurer respectively.

Saxon Spires Patient Participation Group

Spring 2025

The SSPPG is a collaborative team of Patients and Practice Staff, including GPs and Practice Management.

Meetings

Our meetings are held quarterly and alternate between Brixworth and Guilsborough Surgeries. We meet to review issues and identify ways of assisting the practice in its effort to improve the services available. The next meeting will be held at Guilsborough Surgery on Wednesday 14th May at 6pm. New members are always welcome.

Cancer Research Fundraising

Saxon Spires Practice is supporting a Cancer Research Fundraiser which is being launched at Brixworth Park Run at Brixworth Country Park on Saturday 22nd March at 9am.

The fundraising event is to support Dr Susie Northover. Details of the fundraiser and Dr Northover's story can be found by clicking a link in the News Section of the Practice website. *www.saxonspires.co.uk*

Health Walks

Health Walks will take place on the third Monday of each month. The March Health Walk is on **Monday 17th March.** Meet at the Tea Rooms, Waterloo Farm, Great Oxendon LE16 8NB. It will be a 60 minutes walk starting at 11am.

To order food for lunch please select your menu choice in the Tea Room from 10.30am. The Walk Leader will be Leader Rosemary Ward

Facebook

Watch our Saxon Spires Patient Participation Group Facebook page for regular announcements on all activities or for more information drop us an email on *ssppg2022@gmail.com* or phone 01604 880552

Barbara Hogg

Thank you for Christmas hampers from a grateful recipient

A very sincere and heartfelt "THANK YOU" to all the people (and animals!) responsible for the wonderful hampers that were delivered to us older residents just before Christmas. It is good to know that people have time to think about those of us who, for various reasons, are less able to enjoy Christmas and the New Year quite as we might have done in the past. Again - thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU.

SPRATTON VILLAGE HALL UPDATE

100 years old – soon…. The Village Hall committee are working towards celebrating the centenary of Spratton Village Hall (formerly WI Hall) in 2028. Before then we have various projects to complete.

Roof: Early in February we heard back from West Northants Council regarding our pre-planning application to remove the existing roof and replace with modern slate suitable for the conservation area. We now need to complete the full planning permission process. **We are looking for someone with planning permission knowledge to guide us with this process**. If you can help, we would be very grateful. Please contact the village hall committee via email: *sprattonvillagehall@gmail.com*

Panelling: The back of the hall has had some of the damaged panelling replaced. As soon as the weather improves this project will continue and include various other areas of the hall outer panelling.

Use: Currently the hall is in use every evening during term time. It is available during the daytime for meetings, new clubs, organisations, sports etc. also available weekends.

For all bookings, please contact Linda Fletcher 07808 734124
sprattonvillagehall@gmail.com

Co-op Community Fund

We have also joined the **Co-op Community Fund** to help us make the outside area at the back of the hall into a useable space. Our plans are to involve the groups who use the hall by putting in planters, shrubs etc. **Please, if you are a member of the Co-op, support our fundraising.** We will receive £500 in the spring to help us start this project, and how many members of the public support our project will determine how much more we receive later in the year. *Please, please, support us keeping our Village Hall.*

Co-op Members can help us raise funds for our community project through the @CoopUK Local Community Fund. Check out this video clip to find out how you can choose Spratton Village Hall as your local cause. https://youtu.be/PFAfG-io0K8?si=dQOBsnb48hbN81vy

About this cause

We are a community Village Hall that is regularly used by the local Guides, Cubs, Brownies, Parish Council and various other local community societies. We are aiming to improve the outside area behind the Hall to turn it into a useable educational and recreational space, in particular for our younger users—Guides, Cubs and Brownies



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Spratton CE Primary School News

"I have come that you may have life and have life in all its fullness." John 10:10

Exciting news for working parents!

We've teamed up with Ducklings Pre-School and Holiday Club in Creaton to offer new wraparound care from 8am to 6pm.



Thanks to their new minibus, children can now attend After School Club five days a week from 3:30pm to 6pm. This service is designed to help parents with more flexible working hours or to extend their day if needed.

The response has been amazing, with up to 12 children enjoying the ride on the 'Ducklings bus' each afternoon. Once at Ducklings, kids have a great time with activities like pool, table football, gymnastics, science experiments, Forest School, baking, and more!

If your child attends another school because our previous options didn't fit your needs, we'd love to show you how things have changed. Come take a tour and see how we can support your family better!



We're dedicated to making our village school the best choice for all children in Spratton and beyond.

Stay connected with us here:

www.facebook.com/SprattonCEPrimarySchool

www.instagram.com/spratton_ce_primary_school

Mrs Liz Crofts, Headteacher

100 Club

SPRATTON & PITSFORD PUMAS
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Peter Owen, Chairman of Spratton & Pitsford Pumas FC C/O Creaton House, 24 The Green Creaton, Northamptonshire NN6 8ND







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Sarah
Project Coordinator
sarah@cypn.org

Gemma
Youth & Community Manager
gemma@cypn.org





SPRATTON is OPENING some GARDENS to raise funds for the NURSING and HEALTH CHARITIES on Sunday 8th June 2025 from 11.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m.

2024 was another record year for the National Garden Scheme donating- £3,501,227.

The lion's share, £2,550,000 went to some of the UK's best-loved nursing and health charities.

The long-term nature of funding from the National Garden Scheme allows these charities to continue the provision of critical community nursing services, end of life care, and respite for families and carers across the UK. The impact of this long-term commitment was celebrated in 2024 by a milestone of 40 years of continuous funding for Macmillan Cancer Support, during which time NGS has given them more than £19.6 million. For more information about beneficiaries please go to: *www.ngs.org.uk/who-we-are/beneficiaries*

Locally Northampton General Hospital has benefited with support for the new Maggie's centre, which provides a "drop-in" place for anyone who has been affected by cancer. They had the "Topping Out " Ceremony in early February. For more information go to *www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-northampton* or call 0300 123 1801

Unfortunately, this year the number of gardens opening has fallen and so please consider opening yours to the public for these special causes.

You can find out more at *www.ngs.org.uk.*

If any of you would like to support the essential work of the nursing and health charities and would like to help in some way please do get in touch.

Thank you and do please keep gardening – it's so good for you!
Lucille Knapp
07951 612733





Spratton Pocket Park

The Pocket Park, actually the closed cemetery on Brixworth Road, has now been an area designated for growing wild flowers, and hence attracting insects, birds and small mammals, for 20 years. So it seems a good time to review what has happened and where it is now.

20 years ago

Back in 2004 the Parish Council were faced with a site that had very few visitors and even fewer people that were interested in it. There was only one burial, into a previously purchased plot, after the 1950s so those that had family buried there may well have left the area. The original thin concrete footpath was badly broken up and the lych gate needed repairs to the masonry and oak frame, both safety issues. At that time Northamptonshire County Council were promoting interest in nature that was, and still is, disappearing. The Parish Council invited NCC to send their experienced staff to the village to see what could be done here. The NCC suggestion was that the old cemetery should be used to encourage wild flowers.

The Parish Council were not sure about how residents would respond to this proposal so a number of articles were placed in the Parish Newsletter during 2005 and, as there was no adverse comment, the wild flower project began. Initially oxeye daisies and wild daffodil bulbs were planted with the help of the Girl Guides.

Pocket Park 2012

Additional species of wild flowers were introduced and the site slowly became more of a wild flower meadow as the coarse grasses, brambles and nettles reduced. However, the issues of the path and lych gate were becoming more urgent. The cost was likely to exceed £15,000 which the Parish Council did not have. After investigation it was found that if the site was accepted by the County Council into the Pocket Park scheme it might be eligible for grants to improve conditions. Thus in 2012 the site became a Pocket Park. Grants were received from Northamptonshire County Council, Daventry District Council and the Lottery Fund with the balance being provided by Spratton Parish Council who own and are responsible for the care and maintenance.

Opening

Work began:- the old concrete path was removed and replaced, the masonry to the lych gate and wall were repaired and so was the oak frame. Two oak benches were installed and an interpretation board added. Upon completion the site was opened, on 14th June 2014 by Mrs Pasley-Tyler and the local MP, Chris Heaton-Harris, also attended.

As all this was happening Sarah Raven was producing a series for BBC television in an attempt to preserve our wildlife. The series ran in 2011-2012 and Sarah

visited our Park with a camera crew and subsequently it was included in one of the programs.

The Northamptonshire Garden's Trust included our site in its 2021 Journal under a section "Rewilding God's Acre" which is a charity associated with the Church of England. It was founded in 1982 by Dr Franklyn Perring who lived at Stoke Doyle. The objective is to promote the management of Churchyards in a wildlife friendly way.

Awards

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust have a scheme for Churchyard Conservation which sets criteria for various Awards, Bronze, Silver and Gold, for Churchyards depending upon the attraction of the site for wildlife. Although our site is not strictly a Churchyard it was accepted into the scheme and our first Silver award was made in 2014. The awards last for three years, although Covid stretched this on one occasion recently, with two Gold awards to Spratton having been made since. This year the site is due for its fourth assessment.



Award plaques displayed on the lych gate of the Pocket Park

Last year more than 120 species of wild flower were growing on the site. Snowdrops and Winter Aconites begin to appear in January with a succession up to the Devil's-bit Scabious and Colchicum in September when all the top growth is cut and removed from site at the beginning of October. This is necessary so the mat of rotting vegetation does not stifle new growth and so nutrients do not get absorbed into the soil. Wild flowers do best in poor soil whereas nettles, grass and brambles like rich soil. The hedge is also cut at the end of the year.

Dave Cooke



Spring time in the Pocket Park—aconites and snowdrops



Snowdrops round Commonwealth War Grave in Pocket Park commemorating Pte Richard Adnitt, 6th Btn, Northamptonshire Regiment, died Nov 1942

Spratton Garden Club

Spring is springing into action; the evenings are lighter, birds are singing brighter and bulbs and buds are bursting into life. At last we can look forward to warmer days and enjoy being outdoors without feeling a chill. We can also look forward to our village Garden Club commencing its programme for spring, summer and autumn 2025. So, sit back, put your feet up, enjoy a cuppa and have a read of what Spratton Garden Club has to offer you for the forthcoming seasons.

Speaker Evenings.

In March, we will learn about how to design a low maintenance garden when Maria Greenhill, will enlighten us about the tricks and treats we can use to save us both time and effort in our gardens (something I wish I had information about years ago!). In October Russell Attwood will speak about soil, mulching and weeds. All are welcome to attend Speaker Evenings. Club members entrance fees are £2 and non members £3. Speaker Evenings start at 7.30 pm and are held in Spratton Sports and Social Club, Smith St. Spratton.

Self Drive Outings. (Evenings 6.30 pm)

The first of these is on 14th May to Woollscott Barn near Dunchurch. This is a large garden of over one and a half acres filled with a variety of plants, many of which are shade lovers. Cost is £9.50 pp. In June we are to visit two gardens which are close together in Sutton Street, Flore: The Old Bakery and Rock Springs. Cost is £15.pp. Friends of members are most welcome to join us on these evenings (A Club membership of £5 is required). Members usually car share and refreshments are included in entrance fees on both evenings. These gardens are also in the NGS.

Coach Outings.

(All day. Coach departs approximately 9.00 am.)

In July we will go to Waterperry Gardens and Rousham Gardens in Oxfordshire.

At Waterperry Gardens there are 20 acres of ornamental gardens, a tea shop, a quality plant centre, garden shop, gallery and museum. Rousham Gardens is uncommercialised, just acres of glorious gardens to explore. Cost will be approximately £39.50 pp.

Our September outing is to Trentham Gardens Staffordshire where we can explore beautiful gardens and enjoy the many attractions this venue has to offer. Cost approximately £39 pp. Both coach outings have approximate costings for both entrance fees and coach travel. We have endeavoured to keep costs below £40 but these costs are subject to change; we are at the mercy of companies whose fees may fluctuate. Firm prices will be given nearer to the dates. As with the self drive outings, a £5 membership fee is required for non members.

Reminders of our events, including our Summer Social in August, will be sent via email to members beforehand. All events will be advertised on Spratton's Facebook page and at the Village Store so there's no excuse for forgetting about us!
Let's hope you'll be tempted to join us and enjoy what our Club has to offer this coming spring, summer and autumn.

Isobel Bromley. Secretary, 07980 081767

SPRATTON SCOUT GROUP

To report on last term, our Scout Group held a well-attended Christingle Service. Money was raised for the Children's Society and the Scouts enjoyed constructing their Christingle oranges. Rather than waste unwanted oranges, some of the leaders made some delicious Marmalade which is on sale in the church at Café Doris. The money goes towards Scout funds.

Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts with their families and Scout Leaders, had a great time at the Old Savoy, Deco Theatre Pantomime in December, which was an excellent performance of *Peter Pan.* We look forward to going this year to see *Beauty and the Beast.*

We always parade up to the church in April to remember St George's Day, also Patron Saint of Scouts, which is on 23rd April 2025. **This year we will be going on Thursday 24th April**, when we, the Leaders, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts all renew our promises. Anyone is invited to join us for the special service. Ex Scouts can also renew their Promise. The Service will start at 6.30pm.

Please note we do have some vacancies in all sections for new members. We would love some adult volunteers too. Come to a meeting and see if you like it. It's very rewarding and a lot of fun!

ALL SECTIONS (BOYS AND GIRLS) MEET ON THURSDAYS IN TERM TIME

Please contact us if you would like to add your child's name to our waiting lists.

Beavers 6 – 8 years Cubs 8 – 10 ½ years Scouts 10 ½ - 14years

Graham Smith Group Scout Leader (M) 07740855011



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TEE SECTION	58.00
ONE FOIL	4.00
SEMI-PERMANENT COLOUR	68.00
EVO COLOUR (NO PEROXIDE/AMMONIA	68.00
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PRE-TRIAL PER HALF HOUR	22.00
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DRY CUT	21.00
ROLLER SETTING	21.00
WET CUT	26.00

SENIOR CITIZENS TECHNICAL SERVICES	
FULL HEAD COLOUR	70.00
ROOTS	64.00
SEMI PERMANENT	60.00
PERMING	70.00

GENTS SENIOR CITIZENS & STUDENTS	
DRY CUT	14.00
WASH & CUT	17.00
WASH, CUT & FINISH	20.00

GENTS CUTTING & STYLING	
DRY CUT	16.00
WASH & CUT	18.00
WASH, CUT & FINISH	20.00

CHILDRENS CUTTING & STYLING	
UNDER 4'S DRY CUT	9.00
UNDER 13'S DRY CUT	12.00
OVER 13'S DRY CUT	15.00

GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE

FREE TEA & COFFEE

OPENING HOURS
MONDAY 8.30am to 6.00pm
TUESDAY CLOSED
WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY 8.30am to 6.00pm
SATURDAY 8.30am to 1.00pm

Wendy Yvonne

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www.wyelectrolysis.co.uk

wyelectrolysis@outlook.com

Wendy Coleman: C.R.P.E, M.B.I.A.E, B.A.B.T.A.C.
VTCT Level 4 Qualified, NHS Registered Provider

To all Spratton W I members

and village ladies

Our Meeting in December was quite an experience. We had Shireen and her group of Belly Dancers, not only to entertain us but they encouraged us to join in at the end!! They told us some of the history of the origins and did different types of the dance, some including sabres!

Our Annual W I Dinner was held in January at The King's Head. The staff made us very welcome and the meal was enjoyed by all.

We were given an entertaining and different performance in February, from Dave Tomkins – Ventriloquist and Magician. He had 3 different puppets, which came out at different times. His voice control was very good and he was even able to sing songs. His magic tricks were also well done. At the end he had us in stitches when he chose someone to go to the front, using his voice to project words into her mouth. This was very funny and had some of us crying with laughter.



Shireen and her Belly Dancers entertained the WI in December

Future W I Events

Tuesday 11 March ~ AGM with Fish and Chip Supper

Tuesday 8 April ~ Optimise Your Health ~ Christine Gould

Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month in the Village Hall at 7.30pm, unless otherwise stated.

New members are very welcome to come along for a couple of free visits. Join our friendly village ladies and have an enjoyable night out.

<u>If you have any queries, please phone</u>:

Carol Constable - Spratton WI ~ 07581029057

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

I wonder how many of our small community will know what VE day means?

Maybe most of us will know that it means Victory in Europe, the day on which the people of all the Allied Nations celebrated the end of the Second World War. **This year we commemorate the 80th anniversary of that victory.**

I don't have either the space here or the qualifications to write a history lesson explaining why this occasion is so important, or indeed relevant. I will instead include just a few archive photographs which are more powerful than any words I can write:



On 27 January, prisoners in **Auschwitz** extermination camp were finally liberated. Over one million people were murdered here by the Nazi regime and many people within the Allied Nations could not believe what they were told…

Dresden, Germany February 1945

25,000 people died in four bombing raids carried out over 3 nights by the Royal Air Force and United States Air Force



London 1940-1941

In 8 months of bombing, over 40,000 people were killed in **London.** From 07 September, the German Luftwaffe systematically bombed London for 56 of the following 57 nights



Can you imagine what it must have felt like for ordinary people of all nations when these dreadful six years were finally over?



Chris Prior-Jones, Spratton Poppy Appeal Organiser

Community Connect

Come and talk to a Community Connect Advisor at Café Doris on the third Tuesday of every month.

Community Connect is a welfare and well-being service run by South Northants Volunteer Bureau and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. We support rural communities by acting as a 'solutions hub' for the following:

- Energy advice or energy-saving tips
- Access to affordable food or food support
- Help in making a return to work,
- Opportunities to discuss caring roles and dispensations available to carers
- Wellbeing and self-care advice
- Benefits advice

Lucy Burling

Spratton Photography Group

Our 2024 club year ended in December with members meeting for a very informative slide presentation and discussion by one of our members. Michael White shared his interesting journey and special interest in wildlife photography which everyone enjoyed,

Trophies were also presented to the 2024 competition winner and runner up in both "Theme" and "Open" category. John O'Reilly was overall winner in both categories and received his trophies from our stand-in chair and treasurer, Mark Blaber.

Francis de Clermont was runner up in both categories and received the "Alan Roffey Runner up" trophies, presented by Veronica Johnson-Roffey in memory of her late husband.





The new club year commenced in January 2025 with our first competition. The **theme** was "Pairs" and our judge was David Belton from Northampton Natural History Society who awarded:

1st John O'Reilly - Side by Side
2nd Sue O'Reilly – Handyman
3rd Michael White – A Pair of Wise Little Owls

Open

1st Michael White – Ready for Flight
2nd John O'Reilly – The Old Barn
3rd Phil Roseblade – Cobra

At our February meeting we welcomed Khandie Rees a local professional photographer with a studio in Northampton. Khandie has an interesting military background, a wealth of photographic knowledge and is a published author. The **theme** was "Feet" and she awarded:

1st Michael White - Chicken Nails
2nd John O'Reilly – Big Foot
3rd Sue O'Reilly – Walked a Million Miles

Open

1st Sue O'Reilly – Blatherwycke
2nd Michael White – Old Boatshed
3rd Ron Wykes – On the Crest of a Wave



Chicken Nails by Michael White



Blatherwycke by Sue O'Reilly



The Old Barn by John O'Reilly

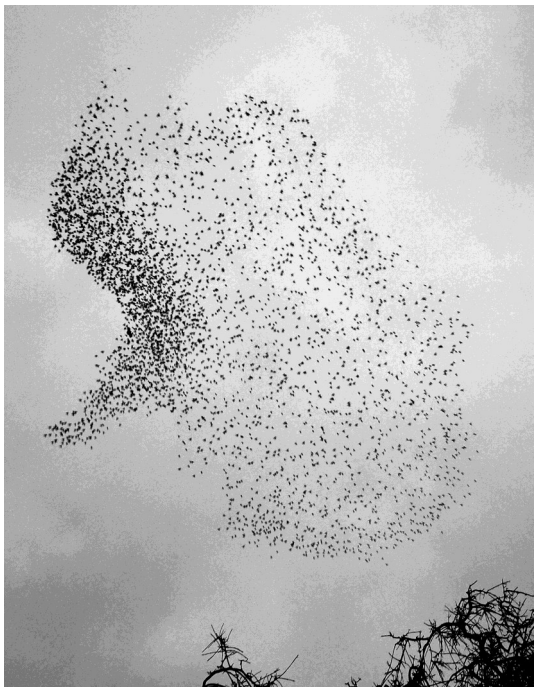


Cobra by Phil Roseblade

All our Images can be seen in full colour on the SPG website, and a selection of club members' images are always on display in Café Doris.

We are actively trying to recruit new members so come along, you will be very welcome. You can contact us via our website: *www.sprattonphotographygroup.wordpress.com* or via Veronica's contact number 07721 623714

Veronica Johnson-Roffey, SPG Committee member



Nature Notes

I am sure a large number of people in the village have been admiring the hundreds/ thousands of starling which have given us so many great aerobatic displays at dusk over the last few years, gradually increasing in number. I notice several celebrities on TV say a murmeration of starlings is one of nature's greatest spectacles which I have to agree with. We normally have to go to somewhere like Brighton or the Somerset Levels to see them but now we have our very own performances to enjoy! (Well not everyone enjoys them when the droppings go on their parked cars but a sheet over a car for a short period is a small cost for the entertainment).

Just a few facts about these fascinating birds:

A starling murmuration is a phenomenon that occurs when thousands of starlings come together in a coordinated flocking behaviour. During a murmuration, the starlings fly together in large, swirling patterns that seem to move as one, creating a mesmerizing display in the sky. The reasons for starling murmurations are not fully understood, but it is believed that they are a defence mechanism against predators and also the more birds that roost together the more they can keep warm. It has been shown in research that a likely reason for the intricate patterns in the sky is that each bird is aware of the position of only the 3 or 4 birds closest to it and is able to move in coordination with those.

By flying together in a coordinated pattern, the starlings are able to confuse and evade predators, such as hawks and falcons and I witnessed this behaviour over the church this week. If you look closely at the photograph you will see the formation is tight and curves in on the left side where there is a larger bird which is a Buzzard.

Starlings have many interesting features such as they have iridescent feathers, can mimic other birds or human sounds and have an unusual moulting process. Many species of birds have a twice-per-year feather change, moulting after the breeding season ends, and then again before the next one begins. But starlings

don't have to go through as much trouble. In the winter they are much more speckled and in the autumn they grow feathers that have white tips. During the winter, the white tips will slowly break and fall off due to wear and tear. By the time spring comes and it's time to breed, they will have lost all the white tips and their head and chest will appear smooth and dark.

They are opportunistic nesters and for some years they have been nesting in swift boxes in the church (usually fledging before the swifts take over the nests) which are also increasing in number in the village.

John Hunt

Spratton's "Hidden Gem" Community Coffee Shop



Café Doris – February 2025

Café Doris Trustees held their AGM recently and several important issues were discussed and agreed;

- We had a successful year in 2024 (our best ever) and as a result we will hold our amazingly good prices at the same level again this year. This is despite the increasing costs of most of our ingredients, so we are better value than ever.
- We thank all our volunteers, cake-makers and supporters for making Café Doris what it is.
- Our special artisan bread pre-order delivery on Tuesdays continues be very popular. Check out the web-site *https://thegoodloaf.co.uk/* Remember to place your pre-orders with us by Thursday for delivery the following week.

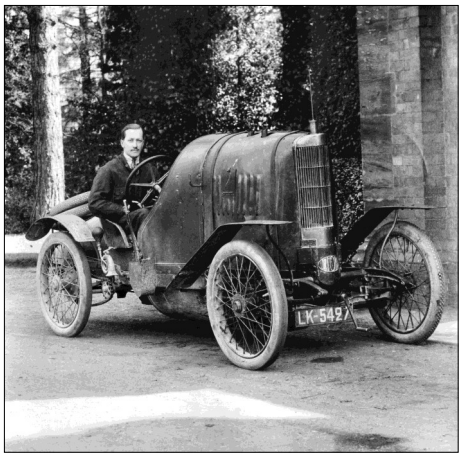


- Our/your Ukraine donations have now reached over £2000 since we started and we continue to support this initiative.

An independent secular Charitable Society operating two mornings per week in St Andrew's Church Spratton, NN6 8HR
For details please contact David Bennett, 4 High Street, Spratton. NN6 8HZ.
Tel. 07962 231798 *cafedorisccs@gmail.com*

Spratton

Local History Society



History Society Archive

We have recently had an unusual enquiry about some photos of William Rhodes-Moorhouse VC that we hold in our archive. The Pre-War Registrar of Club Peugeot UK was interested in William's motor cars and especially his Lion Peugeot Racing car from about 1910. The photo shows him in the strange looking car when the family lived at Spratton Grange. The Peugeot Club are wondering what happened to the car.

Another photo from the archive—this time of the 50th anniversary celebrations of VE Day in 1995. The photo shows the Northampton Scouts Band marching along School Road to the opening ceremony outside the primary school by veteran, Bob Hadnett.



Meetings

We had an excellent programme of talks last autumn ending in a delightful musical Christmas meeting when a couple from the Frumenty Folk Group entertained us with songs from Northamptonshire. Another highlight was our annual Zoom talk when archivist Crawford Craig related to us stories and facts about what Spratton was like in the lead up to the 1921 census—returning soldiers from the Great War, many widows from the War, all men getting the vote and some women over 30 in the 1918 election.

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 19 March** in the Village Hall when we will listen to Ruth Thomas talking about *The Great Fire of Northampton 1675.* Next year is the 350th anniversary, so watch out for commemorations in Northampton itself.

Enid Jarvis, Chair SLHS

Northampton and Lamport Railway

Mother's Day

The Northampton and Lamport Railway re-opens to the public on Sunday 30th March (Mother's Day), with train rides where Mums go FREE! Trains run every hour from 11am to 3pm.

Also, for that extra special Mother's Day treat, we're offering 'Cream Tea Specials' on the 11am, 1pm and 3pm services. Travel First Class and enjoy a delicious cream tea as you gently roll through the beautiful Northamptonshire countryside. Prior booking for the Cream Teas is essential and tickets must be purchased via our website before midnight on Wednesday 26 March.

Other up-coming special events for your diaries include:

20 & 21 April – Easter Egg Specials

4 & 5 May – Heritage Transport Weekend

25 & 26 May – Bluey Weekend

15 June – Father's Day

2025 is a really special year for the Railway as we celebrate 30 years since running our first public trains in the preservation era (November 1995). 2025 is also the year of 'Rail 200', a national celebration marking 200 years since the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825. Look out for more on this later in the year.

For full information, details of up-coming events and online tickets, please visit the Railway's website at www.nlr.org.uk or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@nlrailway)

Summer Newsletter

The deadline for receiving articles for the Summer edition

of the Parish Newsletter is

Saturday 17 May 2025

Please send articles to the Editor as Word documents and images as jpgs.

(Do not send pdfs)

Editor—Enid Jarvis *jarvis.enid@btinternet.com*

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

West Northamptonshire Council		0300 126 7000	www.westnorthants.gov.uk
Spratton Parish Council	Clerk Alan Youel	07715 651904	clerk@sprattonpc.org.uk
West Northants Cllr	John Shephard	07802 246660	john.shephard@westnorthants.gov.uk
West Northants Cllr	Daniel Cribbin	07986 240144	daniel.cribbin@westnorthants.gov.uk
West Northants Cllr	Michael Warren	01604 781082	mike.warren@westnorthants.gov.uk

SCHOOLS

Spratton CE Primary School	Liz Crofts, Headteacher	01604 846530	head@spratton.pdet.org.uk
	School Office	01604 846530	office@spratton.pdet.org.uk
FOSS (Friends of Spratton School)	Jonathan Pykett	07734 567012	info@fosspta.co.uk
Spratton Hall School	Simon Clarke, Head	01604 847292	office@sprattonhall.com

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

Rector, Upland Group of Churches	Revd Allison Twigg	01604 846099	revallisontwigg@gmail.com
Church Warden	Bill Blowfield	01604 847457	bill.blowfield@btinternet.com

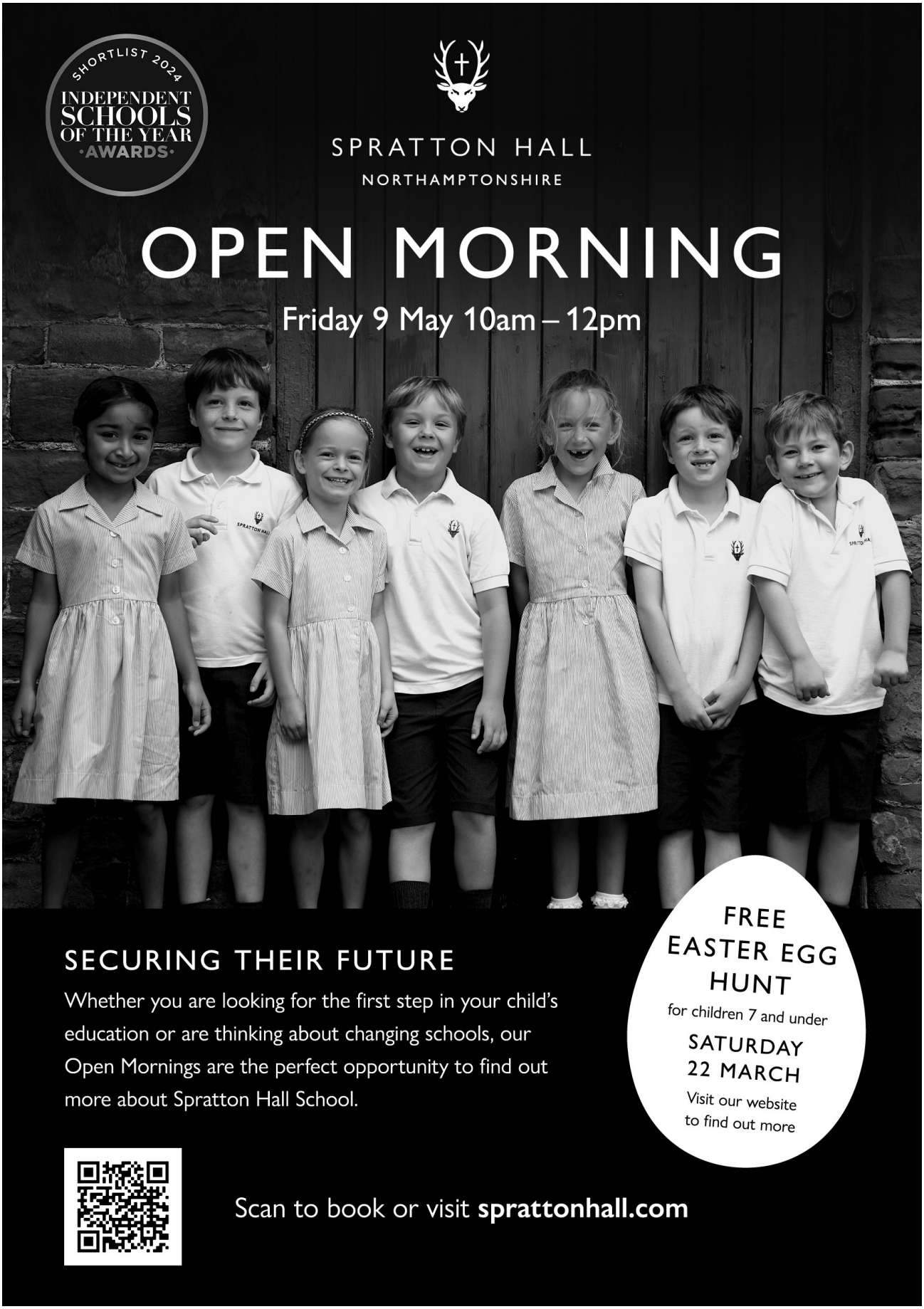
VILLAGE FACILITIES

Village Hall Bookings	Linda Fletcher	07808 734124	
Recreation Field Charity	Julian Gaywood		sprattonreccharity@gmail.com
Town & Charity Land	Pat Parish	01604 847734	parishpat79@gmail.com
Editor Parish Newsletter	Enid Jarvis	01604 821260	jarvis.enid@btinternet.com

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Football Club	Ellis Lambert		
Garden Club	Cherill Hammond	01604 847428	cherill.hammond@hotmail.com
Local History Society	Enid Jarvis	01604 821260	jarvis.enid@btinternet.com
Women's Institute	Carol Constable	01604 845252	carol.constable@gmail.com
Natural Spratton	John Hunt	01604 846705	jfhunt@talktalk.net
Photography Group	V Johnson-Roffey	07721 623714	veronica.johnson@btinternet.com
Sports & Social Club	Jeff Buckby	01604 846585	
Scout Group Leader	Graham Smith	01604 847176	grahamsmith8hh@btinternet.com
Cub Leader	Ruth Dand	07870 686607	
Beaver Leader	Carol Constable	07581 029057	carol.constable@gmail.com
Girlguiding, Spratton	Linda Fletcher	07808 734124	
Brownies	Katherine Rose		1stsprattonbrownies@gmail.com
Spratton Cares	Jo Bishop	07810 524813	sprattoncares@mail.com
Youth Club	Liam Bailey-Shaw	07427 073395	liam@cypn.org
Table Tennis Club	John Hunt	01604 846705	jfhunt@talktalk.net

Cover photograph: Spring daffodils in the Pocket Park, Spratton. See pages 16-17.
(Photo by John Hunt)


SHORTLIST 2024
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR
AWARDS
SPRATTON HALL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
OPEN MORNING
Friday 9 May 10am – 12pm
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