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AUGUST 25



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About Thetford



Twenty Years of About Thetford!

This month marks a significant milestone for us as we proudly celebrate our 20th anniversary. Since its launch in 2005, the magazine has grown into a trusted and cherished publication within the town. Over the past two decades we have showcased local stories, highlighted community events, and supported countless small businesses and local charities. Celebrating local life, About Thetford has become a staple in households across the town and surrounding area. Our pages have chronicled Thetford's growth, change, and vibrant spirit.

Reaching this 20-year mark is not only a testament to the magazine's enduring relevance but also to the strong support from its readers, advertisers, and contributors. As we look ahead to the future, we remain dedicated to keeping community at our heart and telling the stories that matter most.

For more About Thetford news just scan the QR code opposite or visit: www.aboutthetford.co.uk



Scan me

Karen-Emma White, Editor

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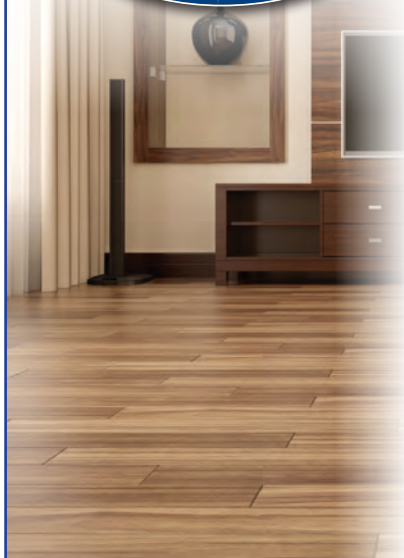
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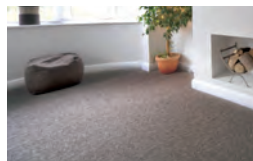
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The Brecks Outdoor Festival is back with Thetford at its centre

The Brecks Outdoor Festival returns for a second year, running from Saturday 9th to Sunday 24th August 2025.

The Festival celebrates the wild and unusual landscape of the Brecks, offering a wide range of outdoor activities. With 55 events on the programme, whether it's yoga, cycling, running, sound baths or crafting, there's something on offer for everyone.

Rather than being tied to one venue, the Festival spans the entire Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks, with Thetford positioned as the central hub of the event.

Locally, Ancient House Museum and the Charles Burrell Museum are running special festival trails, and Thetford Conservation Group is leading a wildlife walk. A local fishing mentor is offering well being sessions for young people, and Thetford's rickshaw will be out on the streets providing history tours.

Those seeking adventure further afield can tackle the longest walk in the festival via the Mildenhall Doves Challenge or enjoy an evening session of storytelling under the stars at West Stow Country Park. Here are three big dates for your diary:

Saturday 9th August - Launch day at Brandon Country Park, featuring storytelling, art activities and stalls from local organisations.

Wednesday 13th August - A river-themed day, based at Thetford's Jetty, with free family activities, a river walk, and opportunities to try swimming, paddle boarding and canoeing.



Get stuck into the beauty of the Brecks this August
Rowing image © Morz Marlow

Thursday 14th August - A celebration of Thetford's habitats with a meet-the-sheep day in the Market Place.

Full event listings are available at brecks.org, which you can access by scanning the QR code opposite, or in printed programmes available from local libraries and venues.



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Guildhall clock back in action!

On July 9th, the welcome sound of chimes returned to Thetford Town Centre as the Guildhall clock was recommissioned and reset by Smiths of Derby. The original mechanism and bell date to around 1800, with the bell still in its original condition. The clock was refurbished around 1900, when additional mechanisms were added.

Smiths of Derby removed the clock for servicing while work was completed on the cupola and clock tower, reinstating the clock and its chime. This marks the first phase of the refurbishment of the Grade II listed building. The work undertaken has included repairing features damaged by weathering and wood rot. This involved replacing pillars around the cupola, repairing lead work, and restoring the clock face surround. Rotten wood has been replaced and the carvings around the clock faces carefully restored. Carpenters hand-carved each section using re-purposed original wood to match the heritage design.

Thetford Town Council has worked with heritage specialists to ensure a high standard of restoration. The scaffolding has been removed and the building steam cleaned. Bird netting is now being added and the remaining scaffolding is expected to come down by early August. Phase 2 of the project will involve replacing the Dormer window at the front of the building, which has been removed and taken off-site for restoration. Further assessments of the second cupola and the roof will be conducted to determine if any additional repairs and restoration works are needed to support the preservation



Left: Four stages of the cupola's restoration



of the building. The Town Council will open its doors during Heritage Open Days in September, with behind the scenes details about the restoration. Keep an eye on the Council's website and social media for updates.

For more on the history of the Guildhall, check out Thetford Past and Present on Page 20!

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heritage open days

Thetford Open Studios Returns!



this stunning new painting for all things Thetford and will be producing limited edition prints and a range of merchandise including tea towels, mugs and coasters. Emily's original painting will be on display for the whole week.

This year we are also collaborating with Croxton. Our textile artist Annette Morgan is curating a Contemporary Textile Exhibition for CQ Iceni at the village hall and the amazing round tower Croxton Church will also be opening - both events take place on Sat 20 and Sun 21 Sept - make sure you enjoy everything on offer.

NEW workshop dates announced, all Wednesdays:

Needle Felting 29 Oct & 19 Nov • Block Printing 12 Nov & 3 Dec

We're back! Thetford Open Studios returns for our third year, open every day 11am - 5pm from Wed 15 - Sun 21 Sept. Your chance to not only see the beautiful work of our local makers and artists, but to meet the maker as well! Takes place at the beautiful airbnb Maker's Cottage, 20 Magdalen Street, IP24 2BN (entrance from the rear - Link car park). Across the 5 days, look out for artist Dan Morgan • textile artist Annette Morgan (Wed only) • Needle Felter Chris Sanderson • driftwood sculptures from Julie Eagle • Janet Smith-Gibbon's recycled copper jewellery • Brett Straight with Thetford scenes sgraffito ceramics • Yvonne Pratt Textiles • Rick Stephenson Art glass engraving and lino cut printing from Gill Thornton.

We are also beyond excited to reveal exclusively to the About Thetford magazine, that we will be joined by artist Emily Chapman (Sat 20 Sept). We have

been working with Emily on

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Songs of struggle and hope

In their debut performance, the Thetford Gospel Soul Collective guided the audience through a powerful narrative, the dream of liberation from slavery and its eventual realisation. This small group, led by Martin Ely, shares a passion for gospel and soul-infused music. Their programme, *From Shackles to Freedom*, was thoughtfully structured, with narration woven throughout to provide historical context for each song.

Image: ©Marie Estimada



Opening with *Go Down Moses*, once banned by slave owners, yet a beacon of hope for the enslaved. Songs like *Wade in the Water* conveyed hidden messages and practical advice; stepping into water helped escapees evade tracking dogs by masking their scent. Several pieces were tied to the 'underground railroad', the secret network of routes and safe houses that guided many toward freedom in the northern states and Canada.

The group delivered a heartfelt performance and was met with well-deserved applause from an enthusiastic audience, who happily clapped along and joined in when invited. A retiring collection of £127.00 was raised. Formed earlier this year, the Thetford Gospel Soul Collective meets every Tuesday at the Howlett Hall in Thetford Methodist Church. New members are always welcome, no need to read music or audition, just bring a love of singing.

For more information, please contact Martin on 07776 256999 or email:

GospelSoulCollective@gmail.com



Thetford Singers' musical magic

The Thetford Singers' annual summer concert treated audiences to a delightful evening of musical theatre, featuring a lively journey through iconic show tunes with a few unexpected twists along the way. The Carnegie was filled with rich harmonies and uplifting melodies, creating a vibrant atmosphere that nearly lifted listeners from their seats by the finale.

The 42-strong choir was led by Musical Director Chris Parsons, with Fiona Barnett on piano and Simon Barnett on percussion. The programme included favourites from *The Lion King*, *Les Misérables*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, and *Mamma Mia*. The choir was joined by Thursday Nights, who performed the jazzy and light-hearted *Jonah-Man Jazz*. This six-song suite brought a fun twist to the Old Testament tale, with narration by Simon and direction by Sally Bauer.

The toe tapping moment of audience participation came during *You'll Be Back* from *Hamilton*, where King George III's tongue-in-cheek plea to halt the American Revolution struck a particularly witty note, especially fitting in a town that gave the world revolutionary thinker Thomas Paine. It was another polished and joyful performance from Thetford Singers. The group welcomes new members and meets every Wednesday evening, returning on 3rd September. For more information:

www.thetfordsingers.org

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Best Day Ever with Thetford Players!

Thetford Players dived back under the sea for *The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition*, directed by Charlie Wilson and Will O'Donnell.



Summer-Brooke Harvey takes centre stage as SpongeBob. Image: ©Maria Cooke

Returners from panto, Summer-Brooke Harvey and Charley Holt, led the show confidently as BFF's, SpongeBob and Patrick. Along with Sandy Cheeks, played by Players first-timer Elena Young, they defied the odds and saved their town from the eruption of Mount Humongous, an impressive 13-foot high volcano built by set designer, Nat Holding. The rest of the young cast brought the world of Bikini Bottom to life with confident singing and choreography, plus a healthy dose of humour. Handmade costumes by Carol Smith were the icing on the cake; watching Squidward (Reece Fuller) tap dance whilst adorned with a second pair of legs was certainly a stand out moment!

"It has been a pleasure to watch new youth members bond with our group and work so hard to bring this show together," said Chairperson, Jo Cooper. "To say that I am proud of this group is definitely an understatement."

The Players are now busy with their next panto, *Hansel and Gretel*, debuting in January.

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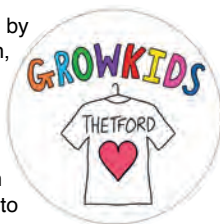
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Growkids opens new space at CBC

Growkids Clothes Bank has reopened at the Charles Burrell Centre (CBC), now in a bigger and better space.

Originally launched in 2020 by Thetford Vineyard Church, Growkids began as a click-and-collect service. Thanks to generous local donations, the shelves filled quickly, serving families in need, from domestic abuse survivors to young parents and foster carers.



In 2021, the team moved to a shop front on the Abbey Estate, offering more than just clothing. With refreshments, a play area and courses on parenting, money and mental health, it became a place to connect and thrive. After roof issues forced closure, volunteers have helped renovate the former CBC science lab into a welcoming new hub with sofas, a coffee bar and play space.

Growkids is open in the Vineyard Centre (Blue Zone, CBC) on Tuesdays (12-3pm) and Thursdays (9:30am-12:30pm). Find them on social media:

@growkidsthetford or email:
growkids@thetfordvineyard.church.

Thetford Municipal and United Charities Reg Charity No. 1059877

Almshouse Vacancy

The above charity provides accommodation for people over 65 years of age, or for disabled people who have lived in Thetford for four years or more. The cottage includes a living room, kitchen, shower room, and bedroom. It features secondary glazed windows and a moderately sized rear garden.

Please note: Pets are not permitted, and there is no facility for storing or charging electric mobility scooters.

To request an application form, please contact the Chairman, Mrs P Spencer, by phone:

01842 765443

Thetford Open Gardens Celebrates Record-Breaking Fundraising Year

The Thetford Open Gardens (TOG) team is thrilled to announce this year's incredible fundraising total, a fantastic £18,724.22 raised for St Nicholas Hospice Care through three events held between April and July. A fitting tribute to TOG founder Liz Hodgson. "This year saw the launch of our first-ever TOG Curry Night, generously hosted by New Saffron, which was a huge success," said TOG Chair, Karen-Emma White. "We followed that with our annual plant sale in May, and of course, the beloved Open Gardens Day in June, now a staple of the Thetford calendar."

Karen also acknowledged the invaluable support that makes these events possible. "We're incredibly lucky to have long-standing support from Lawsons Estate Agents and Thetford Garden Centre, who've been with us for 19 years. We're also grateful to Leaping Hare, About Thetford magazine, Tesco Thetford for hosting our garden owner celebration, and Colour Print, who stepped in to help after our original printers closed in March."

The team offered heartfelt thanks to everyone who played a part including the Mayor. From those who



donated prizes and opened their gardens, to those who bought raffle tickets, attended events, or sponsored the campaign. "Thetford Open

Gardens is about the power of small contributions coming together. We truly believe that together, we can make a difference, and this year proves it." George Chivers, Community Fundraising Manager at St Nicholas Hospice Care, expressed

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Images: Garden owners and the TOG team celebrate this year's grand total. Volunteers with Mayor of Thetford, Cllr Carla Barreto in Sue's garden

his amazement at the final total. "I'm still in shock! Honestly, no words can do it justice. When I heard it was a record year, I expected a few hundred pounds more, not thousands! It's truly incredible." This year's total exceeded the previous record by £3,842.48. The funds will directly support the Thetford community, especially as the hospice faces the challenge of losing Norfolk ICB funding.

Looking ahead, Thetford Open Gardens is preparing to mark its 20th anniversary with a special '20 for 20' campaign. "We never imagined we'd get this close to our milestone," said Karen. "So next year, we're pulling out all the stops to make it a celebration to remember!"

Next year's events include the Open Gardens Day on Sunday 28th June and the Plant Sale in early May. If you'd like to get involved please email: thetfordpengardens@gmail.com

To sign up your garden, use the QR code opposite:.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 20th October, 7pm in the cafe area at CBC, and all are welcome.





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PARS Champions Community Spirit Through Kee Giving

Thetford-based business PARS is proud to support employees who give back to their communities. Through the Kee Giving community investment programme, team members can apply for up to £1,000 in funding for non-profit causes, from fundraising events and sports coaching to endurance challenges and local initiatives.

The PARS team has embraced the programme with enthusiasm, completing three charity challenges so far this year. Two were led by General Manager Liam Catchpole, who ran the Cambridge Half Marathon for Cancer Research and the Manchester Marathon for St. Ann's Hospice. For the third, Mike Upton took part in this year's Thetford Open Gardens, having opened his garden previously in 2022. "Being able to donate £1,000 to St Nicholas Hospice Care was too good an opportunity to miss," said Mike, who enjoyed welcoming visitors with his wife Maggie.

Kee Giving is open to all PARS employees, not just office staff. The next planned event is Only the Brave 2025, a 10km mud and obstacle run in Euston, raising money for the East Anglian Air Ambulance (use the QR code opposite to donate).



Neil, Mandy, David, Mike and Liam from PARS

Liam will be joined by David Abrahams and Lewis Jones for this challenge. An application is also underway for the Run Norwich 10km in September, supporting the Norwich City Community Sports Foundation. If approved, it will be PARS's fifth Kee Giving initiative this year, with a goal of completing five to seven annually.

PARS began its KEE Giving journey last year, donating £1,000 to the Bury Town Disabled Football Team to support travel and equipment costs, a cause close to home, as one of the team's players is a PARS employee.



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Summer at Ancient House Museum

V80 This summer, Ancient House is joining thousands of people across the country to remember the end of the Second World War, 80 years ago, on VJ Day – *Victory in Japan Day*. On Friday 15th August, the museum will host a family-friendly event exploring the role local people played in VJ Day. Visitors will be able to learn the stories of those who served in the Far East, with a costumed character portraying a serviceman from the time. You can also make a sweet treat to celebrate the end of the war and fold a peace crane for the future.



Meet the Vikings as part of the Brecks Outdoor Festival. Image: ©Norfolk Museums Service

On Saturday 23rd August, visitors will become archaeologists, investigating a recreated Viking burial site to learn about Viking Thetford. They'll also be able to meet costumed Viking characters and strike their own Viking coin. This is part of the Brecks Outdoors Festival.

Throughout the holidays, visitors can enjoy museum trails to gain a new perspective on the collections and win a small prize. Themes include *Rainbowsaurus*, the *Flint Alphabet Treasure Hunt*, and *Prince Frederick's Painting Collection*. The museum is delighted to be partnering with Kids in Museums and Simon & Schuster Children's Books as part of the national *Grimwood Museum Adventure*. Spot Grimwood characters hiding around the museum, elect a new Mayor of Grimwood, and design them their very own campaign poster! Complete the trail and get a free Grimwood sticker. Plus, enter the competition and one lucky winner will receive a signed Grimwood book bundle and a Double National Art Pass + Kids, courtesy of Art Fund.

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Summer of fun at Thetford Library

The Summer Reading Challenge 2025 is in full swing, and this year's theme, *Story Garden: Adventures in Nature and the Great Outdoors*, is already inspiring young readers across Norfolk.

Children aged 4–11 are encouraged to read six books over the holidays, earning stickers and rewards along the way. There's even a Mini Challenge for under 5s, so everyone can join in!

At Thetford Library, we've transformed our space into a hub of creativity and outdoor-inspired fun. Alongside the reading challenge, we've got a packed programme of free, bookable summer events for children and families, all linked to the *Story Garden* theme:

- Thursday 7th August, 2pm-3pm: *Little Green Fingers Craft & Storytime* (Ages 5-8)
- Tuesday 12th August, 10:30am-12:30pm: *Draw Your Own Fantasy Greenhouses* (Ages 8-11)
- Thursday 14th August, 2pm-3pm: *Making a Nature Journal* (Ages 8-11)

- Tuesday 19th August, 2pm-3pm: *Wild Garden Art & Storytime* (Ages 4-7)
- Friday 22nd August, 2pm-3pm: *Nature Craft Fun* (Drop-in)
- Friday 29th August, 2pm-3pm: *LEGO Super Clean-Up* (Ages 10-14)
 - Saturday 30 August, 10:30am - 11am: Medal Ceremony and celebration!



Our popular regular sessions are also continuing to run throughout the holidays, including *Bounce & Rhyme* on 10.30am and 11.30am on Mondays, and 10.30am on Wednesdays mornings, and *Family Board Games* on Saturdays, 11am-12:30pm.

Ask in the library to find out more, or visit: www.norfolk.gov.uk/summerreadingchallenge

Above: Get involved in the LEGO Super Clean-Up and much more at the library this summer

Keep an eye on our social media and website for longer versions of stories, posted throughout the month: www.aboutthetford.co.uk/news/



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Four-legged friends at Thetford Academy

If you follow Thetford Academy on Facebook, you might have noticed something a bit different during Year 7 transition week - posts weren't coming from Mr Fordham as usual, but from Albus the support dog!

With Mr Fordham away supporting Gold Duke of Edinburgh students, Thomas Paine Sixth Form's Year 12 Media students were asked to take over social media for the week. They pitched the idea of a fun 'Albus Takeover', giving updates from the dog's point of view.

The students planned the campaign, created a house style, and scheduled posts around Year 7 transition activities. The result was a light-hearted, engaging series of posts that also highlighted the sixth form's wellbeing programme.

Thomas Paine Sixth Form currently has three support dogs. Lexie (7) belongs to SENCO Mrs Burbridge and helps in both sixth form and the school's Specialist Resource Base. Albus (4) is Ms Richards' dog and spends two days a week in school. Dave (5), who joined this year, is a rescue dog from Romania and supports students during



Lexi, Albus and Dave, the support dogs at Thetford Academy. Images: ©Lucy Burbridge, ©Craig Chaplin and ©Lindsay Armes respectively.

exam season. "No matter the day, a moment with one of the school dogs makes everything feel a little lighter," said one student.

Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral) Josh Safier said: "The dogs' presence reflects the supportive and inclusive environment we're so proud to have here. It's just one of the ways we ensure students are supported in our community."

Applications for September 2025 entry to Thomas Paine Sixth Form are still open via

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Teenagers at the Ballot Box

As a history teacher I try to take the long view, and the recent announcement that 16-year-olds will be able to vote in the next election feels like the kind of thing that might appear in history textbooks in a century's time. But is it a good idea?

I won't share my own personal view with you, because I'm supposed to be politically neutral. But I can offer some thoughts on the arguments being made on both sides of the debate.

There are a lot of comments along the lines of: "16-year-olds are not mature enough to vote." The fact of the matter is, I can think of plenty of 20-year-olds who might fit into that category. Conversely, I know 12 and 13-year-olds in my school who would take the responsibility very seriously.

A feature of our democracy is that maturity, or even a basic understanding of national policies, is not a requirement. You don't have to turn up to the polling station with an A Level Politics certificate. Voting is, rather, a fundamental right of being a citizen, regardless of how seriously you take it.

I have more time for arguments about consistency. In many areas, we've recently raised the age of certain responsibilities to bring them in line with the legal definition of adulthood at 18, and this is a rare example of the government moving something in the other direction.

Perhaps what this does do is remind us that, for many years, politics has been targeted at older



generations. It's easy to patronise young people and pay lip service to their views, but maybe now we'll see politicians take this a bit more seriously.

So here's my suggestion: go and speak to some teenagers about politics. Ask them what they think, argue with them about the issues, and take seriously what they have to say.

It's those debates and discussions that are the basis of our democracy.



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Past and Present: Thetford Marketplace

Thetford's Market Place has undergone numerous changes since being established in this part of the town in the later part of the 18th century. The past photograph was taken on a market day, probably about 1920, just before the War Memorial was erected.

The Shambles, which now houses retail units, was originally built in 1837 and was used as a bus station in the 1970s. To the left is the Guildhall, which dates back to at least 1337. The current building was completed in 1901, and the historic clock tower has recently undergone extensive renovation.

To the right is the Red Lion, where a pub has stood since the 15th century. The current 1830s building became a Wetherspoons pub in 2012. David Osborne, who created *Thetford Past and Present* worked on the boards about the history of the area inside the pub.

Past photograph courtesy of the David Osborne collection from the About Thetford archive



Discover more of Thetford's history in the *Back in Time Trail!*

Starting at the Ancient House Museum, follow the trail and view the best of 20 years of *Past and Present*, in the locations the pictures were originally taken.

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About Thetford turns twenty!

When the first edition of About Thetford landed on doormats in August 2005, it was a modest black-and-white publication with a two-colour cover, packed with local listings and a few short features. Fast forward to today and the magazine celebrates its 20th year, as a full-colour publication at the heart of Thetford life.

When Trevor and Marje officially took over from issue 8 in May 2006, the magazine still had to be taken to the printers on a CD at 3am! Marje focused on community stories while Trevor managed design and production. Together, they built a loyal readership, championing local causes and featuring much-loved content such as *Past and Present* and TGAC's *Garden Notes*.

In 2014, Terry Jermy took the reins, maintaining its focus on positive local news, expanding the magazine's distribution to surrounding villages. Karen-Emma White joined in 2016, creating a new website and took on the mantle of Editor a year ago, alongside launching the About Thetford App.

"I started writing for About Thetford in 2007, during my days at Ancient House. The support the magazine gave the museum was invaluable and I'm delighted it remains so. Becoming the editor is a privilege, for 20 years we've been a mainstay in the town, and will continue to innovate and remain committed to supporting our community."

In November last year, George Cooke joined the team as Deputy Editor, fresh from a Journalism degree at the University of East Anglia. Almost every story is now posted on the About Thetford website, as well as social media, meaning there's more ways to read About Thetford than ever. "Whilst it's important to stay up to date with modern techniques and technology, the joy of working at About Thetford is the commitment to classic free-to-access print journalism, which



Deputy Editor, George Cooke with Editor, Karen-Emma White in the About Thetford office

is such a valuable local resource," he said. "The town is very important to me, and it's brilliant to feel so connected to our community. I hope the magazine helps our readers feel the same way."

Today, About Thetford remains a vital part of the town's community life as the only free magazine of its type in the town. Each month About Thetford promotes over 100 local advertisers, as well as covering a wide range of local stories and regular much loved columns.

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Bird flu update from BTO

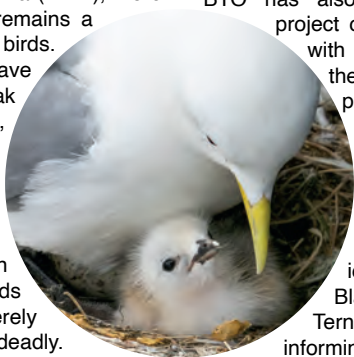
High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI), more commonly known as bird flu, remains a problem for wild and domestic birds.

Over 80 bird species in the UK have tested positive since the outbreak began in 2021, with seabirds, waterbirds and raptors most affected by the disease.

The virus can be carried globally by wild bird movements, along migratory flyways that span thousands of miles. Some birds carry the virus without being severely affected, while for others it is deadly.

Once present, it can infect a wide range of birds and persist at low levels in the countryside in what is known as a 'reservoir'. Understanding local and long-distance bird movements, and how features like freshwater bodies harbour the virus, is key to understanding transmission.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) helped lead the initial emergency response and has since worked with other organisations to better understand the impact and predict future outbreaks. One action has been expanding live



testing of seabirds in collaboration with the Animal and Plant Health Agency and several universities.

BTO has also launched a satellite-tracking project of Carrion Crows in landscapes with and without livestock to study the interface between wild birds, poultry and humans.

Thanks to birdwatchers using BirdTrack, the charity has accessed real-time reports of sick or dead birds, tracking the virus's spread. This data helped identify the outbreak's move from Black-headed Gulls to Common Terns and then to Kittiwakes, informing local response efforts.

If you find a dead wild bird, do NOT touch it. If you suspect bird flu, search 'report dead bird UK' to access the government's reporting webpage. Several birds collected from Thetford tested positive for avian influenza. You can play an important part in monitoring the disease.

Nick Moran, BTO

Above: Observations by BTO volunteers have helped show that Kittiwakes - a true 'seagull' - are affected by bird flu. Photo © Sam Langlois / BTO

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The heat is on - TGAC garden notes for August

At the time of writing, the weather has been very hot and gardens and plots are looking a little tired and in need of a good soaking! The Club's Summer show saw fewer entries than usual due to the heat sending some roses over early. The flower entries were lovely especially the hanging baskets (pictured) and the vegetables were of a good quality.

National Allotments week is this month, from the 11th to 17th August. The final judging of the allotment competition has taken place and the prizes will be awarded at the Club's Autumn show.

Lettuce can be inclined to 'bolt' in hot, dry weather so keep your plants well watered. Chilli peppers should be ripe and to encourage more fruits to form, pick them regularly. Feeding with a high potassium liquid feed weekly will also keep them cropping. Harvest onions once the foliage starts to die down. Leave them to dry in a dry, sunny place (on top of the soil if the weather stays dry) or in your greenhouse. Store the onions in a cool, dry and well ventilated place. Keep cutting dahlias to encourage more flowers - they make lovely cut flowers for the house. Hollyhocks are the easiest of the mallows to grow, originally from South West China, they have featured in British gardens since the 16th century. It was known to be a healing herb and was widely grown in Palestine. Returning Crusaders came back with the seeds they knew as Holy Hoc and the name stuck! Once you have them in the garden they self-seed liberally and you won't be without them again.

The floral displays around the town for *Anglia in Bloom* look beautiful, cheer up the streets and the new train planter is a credit to the pupils of Thetford Academy and businesses involved. See page 26 to read more about this year's campaign.



6th September sees the Club hold its Open Autumn Show at the Methodist Church in Tanner Street. Entries can be set up between 8.30am and 10.30am and after judging the hall will be open to view entries before prize giving at 1pm. There are numerous classes - vegetables, flowers, fruit, culinary and crafts - so something for everyone. Schedules are available from Yvonne Rout at yvonnerrout@gmail.com. Do have a go!

Happy gardening!
Maggie Baldwin



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Thetford's bloomin' marvellous!

Groups across Thetford are eagerly awaiting the results of *Anglia in Bloom 2025*, after the judges toured the town last month. Thetford in Bloom brings together local groups, businesses, and volunteers, showcasing the town's ongoing commitment to horticulture and conservation.



In the town centre, the judges met community groups including Thetford Conservation Group, Friends of Thetford Station, and Thetford in Bloom volunteers. A standout moment in the town centre was the unveiling of a new train-themed planter designed by Thetford Academy students in collaboration with Warren Services. Further afield, staff and volunteers at the Charles Burrell Centre (CBC) took the judges around their wellbeing garden and grounds

enhanced with plants donated by the Shadwell Estate, alongside their working road train, which is used for community events.

Last year the town received a Silver-Gilt award. The team now hopes to go one better when the results are announced in September.



**Top: Thetford Academy students with their train themed planter in the town centre
Centre: The town's new statue of Boudicca
Bottom: CBC's road train, by the wellbeing garden**

New lambs coming to Castle Park

If you've walked through Castle Park recently, you've probably spotted the sheep dotted across the hillside. The small flock is managed by local grazier Lisa Clayton, whose sheep have become a familiar and much-loved sight in the area.



One of the sheep and lambs grazing on Castle Park

The main reason for the return of sheep to Castle Park was to manage the plant growth across the hills and to encourage the growth and development of native plant species, that were sadly being lost because of the harsh industrial cutting of the site. Natural England regularly attend and assess the area and are thrilled with the return of local flora that they thought had been lost. There are currently ten adult sheep grazing on site, with thirteen lambs expected to join them. Numbers change seasonally to protect the habitat. Some of the sheep already have names, including Cleetus, Flopsy, Marion and Popeye. One bottle-fed lamb is still waiting for a name - Lisa hopes the public will help choose one starting with the letter F, so it can be added to her pedigree certificate. Send your suggestions to:

hello@aboutthetford.co.uk

Castle Park's fencing setup allows sections to be locked off, keeping both sheep and dogs safe. "We don't usually have many issues with dog walkers," Lisa explained, "However if you're walking your dog along the fence line, please keep them on a lead so they can't scabble under fencing or nip at sheep that come over out of curiosity. Sadly, there have been some vicious dog attacks on other grazing sites in Thetford resulting in sheep and lamb deaths. Keeping the sheep grazing locked is the safest option."

Lisa says she hopes the sheep will continue to graze the site for the foreseeable future. "We really love how the community look out for our sheep," she said. "Just checking they aren't stuck in the fence after giving them a stroke would be perfect!"

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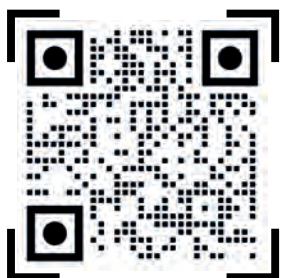
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Summer crackdown on crime in Thetford town centre

Shoppers and businesses in Thetford will benefit from increased police patrols and action to tackle anti-social behaviour in the town centre throughout this summer.



Police officers on the beat on Whitehart Street
Image: ©Norfolk Police

Thetford is among more than 500 towns across the UK taking part in the Safer Streets summer initiative, which will see officers on patrol during peak times, alongside efforts from councils and other local organisations.

As well as a visible police presence, the campaign includes new measures to prevent and enforce against crime such as shoplifting and vandalism, while also aiming to support young people with holiday activities across participating towns.

A new *Tackling Retail Crime Together Strategy* is also being rolled out to help police and retailers work together using shared data. The aim is to disrupt not only organised crime groups but also individuals who repeatedly offend or steal to support addiction.

Local MP Terry Jermy welcomed the initiative, saying, "I welcome this crackdown, which will make a real difference to my constituents in Thetford and those who visit. We all deserve town centres to be free from anti social behaviour."

Slowing traffic on Nun's Bridges

Back in the 16th Century, the Nuns' Bridges were a huge improvement for travellers on Peddars Way. Even then, though, queues of horse-drawn carts likely built up during busy periods and today not much has changed.



Queues of traffic between the two Nun's Bridges and signage on the site to warn pedestrians

The narrow bridges, that sit on the ancient ford over the River Thet and Little Ouse, can't accommodate two-way traffic. There's also no separate footpath for pedestrians, who must walk in the road and hope drivers slow to let them cross.

A speed awareness machine placed by Thetford Town Council has recorded consistently high volumes of traffic: over 600 vehicles crossing between 7am and 9am and more than 670 between 5am and 6pm on weekdays. While many drivers slow down, some do not - speeds of 30mph and above are regularly logged, with one vehicle recently recorded at 50mph.

Following concerns from residents, local councillor Jane James worked with Norfolk Highways to install new signage and road markings, encouraging drivers to slow down and be alert to pedestrians making use of the bridges.

The speed monitor will return in the autumn to track whether the changes are having an impact.



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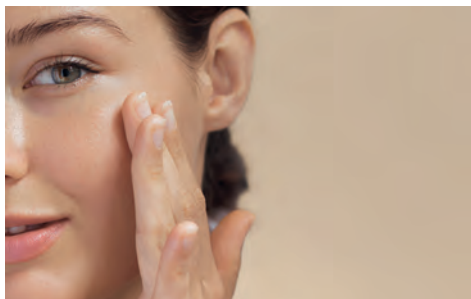
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Breckland Brass Band goes from strength to strength!

Breckland Brass Band is now rehearsing at the state-of-the-art music room at Thetford Academy. We would love you to come and join us, whether you are a returning brass player or someone wanting to start. Rehearsals are Wednesdays 7-9pm at Thetford Academy, with a beginner's training band on Mondays at 3-4pm from September 2025.



Breckland Brass Band's Open Rehearsal
Image: ©Neil James Media

Breckland Brass Band takes part in many exciting projects. We recently collaborated with the Music Scholars at Thetford Academy, The Norfolk Music Hub and The Britten Sinfonia on the 'Dragon's Breath' project to provide beginner brass tuition to 35 girls. An Open Rehearsal was also held in July as part of Brass Band England's Brass Band Week. Members and guests enjoyed playing alongside children from the academy, who are already showing great promise and talent.

By the end of the summer season, the band will have performed at the South Suffolk Show, Thetford Academy, Weeting Steam Rally, Charles Burrell Centre, Walsham Le Willows Open Gardens, and VJ Day events in Stoke by Nayland. Originally formed as Green's Works Band, Brandon, in the 1950s. Some current members include relatives of those who played over 60 years ago!



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Inner Wheel

We had a wonderful time at the races at Ascot (pictured right - in reality a member's house!) when we had a superb buffet meal plus a glass or two of wine. Some members and guests were incredibly lucky when betting on the winners.

Our July meeting was at our President Janey Mackay's home when Justine Staines gave us six different teas explaining their ingredients, origins and how to brew them. Who knew teas could be so different? In August we take a break but are looking forward to meeting again in September.



Thetford u3a

u3a's July speaker was Ed Pope, talking about the Watatunga Wildlife Game Reserve located in north Norfolk. The talk for this month will be on 'The Norfolk Blood Bikes'. This is about the vital service providing blood supplies to hospitals. All talks will start at 2pm and will take place at the Carnegie Rooms, Cage Lane, Thetford, IP24 2EA on the fourth Thursday of the month.

As always, the group is open for new members. To find out more, contact:

membership@thetfordu3a.org

Probus Club of Thetford

Last month's talk at Probus was by Ralph Jackman, who shared his great interest in the Roman Empire. Next month's talk is by a forensic scientist. If you are interested, why not come along? The club hold monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 10.30am in the Church on the Way, Churchill Road, Thetford IP24 2JW.

If you are interested, you will be more than welcome. We also have a monthly lunch at local venues. Details can be found at:

<https://probusclub.net/thetford>

Thetford Society

Tales from the River was the subject of Imogen Radford's talk at the July Thetford Society meeting. Imogen talked about Thetford's rivers and the memories that had been collated as part of The Brecks Fen Edge Rivers project. Many of those present were able to share their own memories especially of those of the old swimming baths in the river.

The August meeting is on Tuesday 5th August at 7.30pm in Thetford Guildhall when Pat Pearson will be sharing her memories of Swaffham.

Thetford Parkinson's Group

August 12th is the Thetford Parkinson's Group's summer garden party. After months of talks and exercise classes, it's time to have fun!

There will be games to play and food for lunch. All those with Parkinson's and their family are welcome. 11am at Thetford Methodist Church.

For more information on local group activities please visit:

<https://aboutthetford.co.uk/news/>

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Thursday 28 August, 2025
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T: 01842 761506
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Latest from School Lane Surgery

Sixteen fantastic members of the School Lane Surgery team recently took part in the St Nicholas's Sunset Walk 2025, covering the 10km (and even 15km... well done Dr Overly!) route around Bury St Edmunds on a hot day. The team was proud to walk together for such an incredible cause.



The School Lane team at the Sunset Walk for St Nicholas Hospice Care

Closer to home, did you know you can now manage your repeat prescriptions easily and securely using the NHS App?

With just a few taps on your phone, you can request your repeat prescriptions any time of day. There's no need to call or visit the surgery - your request goes straight through to your GP without any fuss. It's fast, secure, and trackable, with a simple step-by-step process that patients are finding makes life much easier. You can also check symptoms, receive messages, and view your medical record through the app.

To set up, simply download the NHS App from the App Store or Google Play, create your NHS login, link your account to your GP practice, and start managing your health from your phone. Why not give it a try today?

Marc Rolph
Business Manager, School Lane Surgery

Norfolk Fire Service needs you!

For the first time in three years, Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is opening recruitment for full-time firefighters. Sixteen new recruits will be hired, eight starting in April 2026 and another eight in 2027, stationed across the county in King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, and three sites in Norwich.



The fire service are looking for committed recruits to join their team. Image: ©Norfolk Fire & Rescue

Applications opened on Monday 28th July and close Monday 25th August. These wholetime roles are rare, with Norfolk currently employing around 150 full-time firefighters who work in shifts to keep the county covered 24/7, all year round. Successful applicants will join a 12-week training course at NFRS's dedicated facility, followed by a two-year apprenticeship run by Norfolk County Council's Adult Learning team.

"Being a firefighter is about much more than putting out fires," said Chief Fire Officer, Ceri Summer. "It's a more highly varied, multi-skilled role than ever, and it's a job with a real community focus. If you're committed, physically fit, enjoy teamwork and want to have a rewarding job where you are supporting your communities, this could be the career for you."

For full criteria, FAQs and assessment dates, visit the Norfolk Fire & Rescue section on the County Council website.



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Thetford Bulldogs' 30th Anniversary

Thetford Bulldogs FC has come a long way since forming in 1995 as Barnham Bulldogs. Founded by two parents, the club began with a single team playing at Euston Park and training at Admiral's School. It later moved to Thetford Sports Centre and now trains at the Charles Burrell Centre.

Today, Bulldogs proudly runs 24 teams, including a thriving female section from U8s to Ladies, and supports around 310 players. The girls' game has seen rapid growth since 2013, with Wildcats launching in 2017 and several new squads forming post-Covid. The club also helps young players pursue referee qualifications.

All 50 coaches are volunteers, and the club has received numerous honours including the FA Club Development Award, #HerGameToo Champion Award, and this year's FA Highly Recommended Club of the Year.

Key long-serving members include Joanne Simpson (Club Treasurer), Kirsty Turner (Club

Bulldogs members at their 30th birthday celebration

Secretary), Ed Sheridan (Chairman), and Jack Bailey (U14 Manager). Many former players have gone on to join Thetford Rovers and other adult teams in Breckland and beyond.

For more info, find the club on Facebook, contact Kirsty Turner on **07771 744437** or scan the QR code opposite for the club website:



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Thetford Rugby Club Celebrates Championship Season

Thetford Rugby Club rounded off a phenomenal season with a celebration on Saturday 14th June. After securing the Eastern Counties Two North league title and early promotion, players, coaches, families and supporters gathered to reflect on a brilliant year of rugby.

Aaron Eagle was recognised with two awards, Players' Player and Top Try Scorer, for his consistent impact. Harry Walters earned Young Player of the Year, while Jamie Peaceful was named Coaches' Player of the Year.

Congratulations to all award winners and to every squad member who contributed to the success. Thanks also to Clive and Sam from Force8 for sponsoring the event.

On Friday 4th July, Thetford RFC received the league winners plaque at the Eastern Counties dinner in Bury St Edmunds. Representing the club were Head Coach Neal Thynne, Captain Curtis King, Vice-Captain Connor Sillet, and Chairman David Tanner. With promotion secured, Thetford RFC now looks ahead to the 2025/26 season in Eastern Counties One North.



L to R: Neal Thynne, Curtis King, David Tanner and Connor Sillet with the league winners plaque

Preseason training has now started - every Tuesday and Thursday from 7pm at the club's Two Mile Bottom home. Free rugby for ages 17 - 20 years, half price for service personnnel. Whether you're a seasoned campaigner, returning from a break, or totally new to the game - there's a place for you here. Rugby is more than a sport at Thetford, it's family, community, and blood-sweat-and-cheers passion.

For more information about the club contact:
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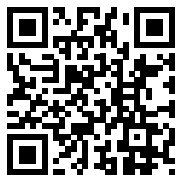
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