

Yours Sincerely

Edition 38 – February 2026



How to get in touch

Broadland District Council residents: 01603 430431

South Norfolk residents: 01508 533933

Email: Helphub@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk



Accessibility

Large print

If you would like a larger print version of Yours Sincerely, please let us know. Give us a call using the number below and we'll make sure all future editions you receive are in a larger font.

Coloured overlay

If you would like your edition of Yours Sincerely printed on coloured paper, please let us know by calling the number below and let us know what colour paper you need for your future editions.



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Welcome to the 38th Edition of Yours Sincerely!

Happy new year and welcome to the first yours sincerely of 2026! We are edging closer to the end of winter and the beginning of spring! We can finally start looking forward to longer days and warmer weather.

I would also just like to introduce myself, my name is Freja and I am the new author of Yours Sincerely! I joined the team at the beginning of the year as a events and community support apprentice and am having a great time getting stuck in and learning lots of new skills.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition and the many more to come!



Community Group Spotlight

Playing For Cake

Singing That Helps Norfolk Feel Better!

Playing for Cake is a Norfolk charity bringing people together through the simple joy of singing. Their sessions

are friendly, inclusive and designed to help people breathe easier, feel brighter and connect with others in a welcoming space. They are based in and around Norfolk in places such as:

- Aylsham • Blofield • Kings Lynn • Long Stratton • North Walsham
- Sheringham • Norwich

They run three key types of sessions across the county:

Stronger Breaths & Brighter Voices supports people with lung conditions, Parkinson's, or anyone wanting to strengthen their breathing and voice. Led by trained professionals, these sessions blend gentle movement, breathwork and uplifting songs to help people feel physically and emotionally better.



For those looking for fun, variety, and a boost of confidence, their Health, Harmony & Happiness sessions offer lively, themed singing with plenty of musical mischief. If you prefer something gentler, Health, Wellbeing & Fun provides a relaxed, café-style sing-along with a new theme each week, perfect for unwinding and meeting friendly faces.



Everyone is welcome, including carers and the cared-for and their sessions are dementia-accessible. There is no booking needed and no pressure to perform. Play for Cake operate a pay-as-you-feel model, so cost is never a barrier and they're grateful for any donations that help them keep sessions going.

You bring yourself and they'll add the sprinkles. Whether you want to breathe easier, think more clearly, or simply share a smile, singing really does make you feel better.

Pop in and see what they're all about!

More information at www.playingforcake.uk

Or feel free to contact Info@playingforcake.uk

Help Hub - Handyperson+ Service

If you have a job that needs doing and are struggling to find someone to help, look no further than our Handyperson+ Service.

Residents 65 and over or those at higher risk can benefit from this service to help with small repairs and changes that make homes safe and secure.

Our team is fully trained and insured and can help with jobs such as fitting key safes and locks, minor plumbing, putting up or replacing smoke alarms, fitting grabrails and putting up shelving.

As well as small works, our handyperson can chat to residents during a visit to see if they may be able to receive any additional help. They have an in-depth knowledge of available grants, allowances, and services a resident may be eligible for.

Services differ between the two districts, but we are working to align these in the future to give everyone the best service. Please be aware there could be a charge for the services offered to you, but we try to make these as minimal as possible.

If you feel the Handyperson+ Service is something you could benefit from, please get in touch using the details below



South Norfolk Residents

Phone: 01508 505284

Email: handyperson.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Broadland Residents

Phone: 01603 430518

Email: handyperson.bdc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk



Broadly Active

Broadly Active is a programme of subsidised exercise that is accessed by referral from your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or pharmacist. It is a 12-week exercise referral scheme, delivered by Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, available through a referral by a clinical professional.



If you would like to improve your health and remain active but not sure where to start or due to a lack of confidence in your current condition, this programme can help you take some simple steps towards enabling a happier, healthier lifestyle.

How can it help me?

Regular activity that makes you warmer and breathe harder has many health benefits. Exercise is evidenced to improve your diagnosed health conditions, reduce medication and improve function for everyday life. Helping you to lose weight, strengthen muscle, reduce the risk of falling and manage or improve a range of medical conditions including:

- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- arthritis
- high cholesterol
- anxiety/depression
- chronic back pain
- stress



How can I get involved?

If you are interested in signing up speak to your doctor, nurse, physiotherapist or pharmacist about being referred. They will discuss your suitability for the scheme and complete the Active NoW referral form, if appropriate.

What happens next?

The online referral form will be sent to Active NoW. Active NoW is a service which will help to support and signpost you into the most suitable physical activity. You will receive a text message from Active NoW once the referral has been received.

During the phone call, Active NoW staff will ask you about your health, goals and activity options, and they can refer you onto Broadly Active. Once referred, you will be contacted to book your induction appointment. Following your induction you will be invited to attend a trial class, prior to joining the scheme.

A range of supervised sessions are available with our qualified and experienced exercise professionals. The exercises will be appropriate to you and any medical conditions you may have. The scheme is available for anyone aged 16 and over.

Where are the Broadly Active sessions held? (Other classes and locations available on referral through Active NoW)

Wymondham Leisure Centre – Circuits and Gym

Long Stratton Leisure Centre – Circuits

Diss Sports Hall, Hope Church – Circuits

Poringland Community Centre – Circuits

The Willow Centre Cringleford – Low Impact Aerobics

Riverside Leisure Centre, Wherry Road, Norwich – Aqua Fit

Norman Centre, Bignold Road, Norwich – Circuit and Gym

The Bob Carter Centre, Drayton, Norwich - Circuit

Spixworth Village Hall - Circuit

Stimpsons Piece, Reepham – Circuit

Youngs Park, Aylsham – Circuits

**BROADLY
ACTIVE**



South Norfolk Community Awards 2026

We are now accepting nominations for the 2026 South Norfolk Community Awards! Nominations will close on 15th May 2026.

We would love to hear about your community heroes including those individuals, schools, community organisations and businesses who commit themselves to benefiting the local community.

Do you know someone who has given their life to helping the community, an organisation who has made a difference to people's lives, or someone whose little acts of kindness and support have a big impact in their local community, we want to know about it!

If you wish to put in a nomination, please visit our website. Alternatively, you can call 01603 430611 and we can support you to submit an application!
www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/leisure/south-norfolk-community-awards

The categories are as follows:

- **Young Achiever Award** - A young person (aged 18 and under) who has made an exceptional contribution to their community.
- **Community Organisation of the Year** - A community organisation who has made a significant impact to the community.
- **Business in the Community Award** - A local business or commercial organisation that has gone above and beyond to support the local community.
- **Volunteer of the Year** - An individual who selflessly devotes their time and energy to the community.
- **Environmental Champion Award** - An individual, school or community organisation who has made an extra effort to have a positive impact on the environment.
- **Connecting Communities Award** - An individual, school or community organisation that has gone out of their way to encourage communities to come together and promote inclusivity.
- **Lifetime Achievement Award** - A person who has dedicated over 20 years of their life to the community, volunteering for the benefit of others and deserves special recognition for their efforts and commitment.
- **Healthy and Active Award** - An individual, school or community organisation that has gone above and beyond in facilitating healthy and active lifestyles.
- **Town or Parish Councillor of the Year** – Recognising an exceptional Town or Parish Councillor who has gone above and beyond to support their local community.

Age UK - Gift of Friendship

Gift of Friendship is a brand new, proactive, goal-oriented service designed to build meaningful relationships and support personal wellbeing.



There are two strands to this service:

1. Gift of Friendship Telephone Befriending. Weekly goal driven conversations tailored to each person's needs—fostering connection, encouragement, and growth.
2. Age UK National Telephone Befriending. Weekly calls from our national partner, providing friendly and engaging conversation

The Gift of Friendship service is not offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Places will be allocated as new volunteers become available. Eligibility criteria will apply, and their Companionship Team will be happy to guide you through the process. **To get in contact with them, please call 01603 785223.**

Better Off Calculator

South Norfolk and Broadland's Help Hub use the 'Better off Calculator' to ensure that when we work with you, our residents, we can ensure that you are receiving all the financial help you are entitled to, including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Assistance.

You can also apply for these through the calculator and the form will go directly to our Benefits Team.

The calculator can currently be accessed through the front page of our website, but also through the Help Hub page, the Benefit Page, and the Council Tax page. Alternatively, you may contact us on the relevant phone number below.

The benefits you may be entitled to are listed below (this is not an exhaustive list):

Benefits	Other Financial Help	Bill Support
Universal Credit	Healthy Start	Warm Homes Discount
Pension Credit	Vouchers	Social Water Tariffs
Housing Benefit	Free School Meals	Energy Grants
Council Tax Assistance	Tax-Free & Free	Social Broadband Tariffs
Attendance Allowance	Childcare	
Child Benefit		

If you need any help with this, please contact the Help Hub:

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Healthwatch Norfolk survey

Have you, or has someone you know, been admitted to an inpatient general rehabilitation ward in Norfolk recently?

Healthwatch Norfolk want to hear your views about how you, or your friends and family, have been looked after in the journey back to independent living.

The survey is focused on people who have been cared for by inpatient rehabilitation services at one of the following locations between July 2024 and July 2025:

- Alder Ward in the Mulberry Unit and the Willow Therapy Unit at Norwich Community Hospital
- Foxley Ward at Dereham Hospital.
- North Walsham and District War Memorial Hospital
- Ogden Court Community Hospital in Wymondham
- Pineheath Ward at Kelling Hospital
- Swaffham Community Hospital.

We want to hear your thoughts about:

- The ward environment
- The quality of care and therapy
- The discharge process including planning, discharge day and the care received after leaving hospital.

To provide your feedback, please call Healthwatch Norfolk on 01953 856029. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.



Fact finder

Norfolk Star Gazing

Norfolk has been renowned for star gazing. Given our clear skies, wide open countryside and low light pollution, it makes it ideal to see the wonders of space, the sky and beyond.

What Can You See?

On a clear night, it is possible to see many fantastic sights above. Most can be seen by just the naked eye!

The Milky Way (not the chocolate bar) can be seen as it looks like a pale, cloudy band across the sky. The stars Sirius and Vega can usually also be seen and you can frequently catch the moon in clear detail in one of many crescents depending on the night! At different times of year, spectacles such as meteor showers or the aurora borealis can also be seen and Norfolk has recently been known to be a prime location to see them, especially in the summer months.



When Is The Best Time To Star Gaze?

There is no specified best time to star gaze however for the best views, there are some things you may want to consider.

It is often best to wait until the evening or early night as it will be darker and make it easier to see. Autumn and winter months are best for this, even though we are starting to go into spring and summer it will start getting warmer and nicer to sit outside with a blanket and a cup of tea!

You can star gaze any night and you may be able to catch a glimpse of a shooting star or perhaps a planet but it is recommended to pick a clear, cloud free night.



Where Is Best To Star Gaze?

There are plenty of good places to star gaze, even in your own home! I have had many evenings spent with friends and family star gazing from the comfort of my own garden. There are also many places around Norfolk which have been known as prime locations:

- **Kelling Heath • Waxham Beach**
- **Wiveton Downs • The Norfolk Broads**

Top Tips For Star Gazing!

For the best results when star gazing, here are some top tips!

It is better to pick a clear night. Although you can sometimes catch some spectacular sights on a cloudy one, you are more likely to see more on a dark clear night.

If you are heading away from home to star gaze, instead of using a normal torch it may be better to use a red torch. Red torches help preserve your vision in the dark and reduce disturbance on wildlife.

If you are stargazing from home, you may want to check a light pollution map online to see how bad light pollution is in your area and how much visibility you will have.

Finally, it is recommended to dress warmly so you may want to get some cosy clothes and blankets out! Temperatures drop significantly at night especially on the coast.

Norfolk's combination of protected landscapes, dark sky sites, and wide horizons makes it a unique destination for both casual stargazers and serious astronomers, offering unforgettable views of the cosmos throughout the year.



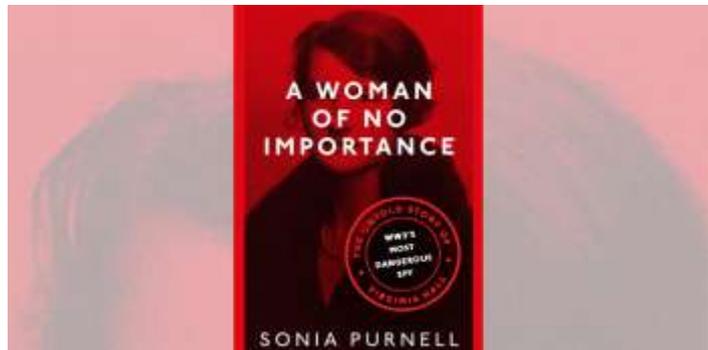
Book Club

This month's book review is written by my mum, Laura Scott. My mum has always had a passion for reading and growing up, she always had a book nearby.

A Woman Of No Importance

Author: Sonia Purnell

Virginia was born and raised in the USA, her family were wealthy however suffered hardship on the death of her Father and her mother felt that wealth was the life that Virginia should aspire to have and marry into.



Virginia did not want to follow her mother's ideals for her and wished to travel and experience life in a different way. This led Virginia to travel to Europe learning languages and creating adventure away from the watchful eye of her mother. Virginia became employed by the US government and continued to work overseas. Sadly, her initial roles for the government fell far below the life that Virginia wanted to live and although she tried numerous times to advance, her attempts were always thwarted and she was left feeling unaccomplished in life.

War broke out in Europe and Virginia saw an opportunity to use her multilingual ability, life skills, ambition and determination to assist the British in obtaining vital information and intelligence in occupied France. Virginia was then deployed to France as part of British intelligence (a spy) to research, recruit and enable the French to rise against the Nazi advance and work with the allies, she was to create resistance using the cover of her being a journalist for an American tabloid.

Virginia turned out to be an extremely dynamic, resourceful, and adaptable individual. She far exceeded the expectations of her superiors even under constant scrutiny of being a woman and being degraded and undermined constantly by male colleagues.

Throughout the course of WWII Virginia defied the odds, creating effective pockets of resistance across France. She enabled new agents to have a safe haven, created networks, safety nets, escape routes and financial backing to enable the resistance to flourish and achieve its aim.

Virginia never sought praise, her focus was always to achieve the best possible outcome for the French people to prevent the Nazi's from dominating and winning the war in Europe. This was a high bar set personally by Virginia and one that frustrated her when males within the British and US agencies and government undermined or failed to appreciate her importance and vital significance.

As the Germans advanced the risks to Virginia, the SOE and the French resistance became extremely high. Many were captured, tortured and killed. No matter how many setbacks Virginia suffered, she came back more determined, more ambitious and always with the support of a loyal band of her well-established resistance. The Nazi's feared her and her dynamic and unfailing ability to disrupt, thwart and destroy Nazi advances. This made her their primary target in routing out allied spies in occupied France.

The book guides you through the years of WWII and lays bare the harsh reality of how one country tried to dominate a country it occupied by force. The author has written the book in such a way you became engrossed in Virginias unbelievable achievements and all that she manages to accomplish.

Virginia single handily enables the Allies to embed themselves in France, creating valuable intelligence opportunities in the growth of her resistance networks that ultimately enables the Allies to thwart German advances in parts of France and assist the Allies in defeating the Germans and freeing France from their Nazi aggressors.

Virginia Hall was a truly remarkable individual, she accomplished and achieved far beyond that of any person male or female behind enemy lines in occupied France working as part of the allied intelligence networks. She is a heroine of the war and her legacy is still talked about in some parts of rural France to this day.

I knew nothing of Virginia or her remarkable heroism prior to being gifted this book for my 50th birthday by my mother-in-law. It has left me feeling humbled yet empowered by what she achieved in great adversity due to situational circumstance, being a female and one final twist, her hidden disability!

Virginia was highly decorated for her courageous intelligence work by France, Britain and the United States.

- **United States Government: The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC)**
She was the only civilian woman to be awarded the DSC during World War II, which was presented by General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, head of the OSS, in 1945.
- **British Government: Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)**
She was awarded this honor by King George VI in 1943 for her work with the SOE, though it was presented to her family later due to the secrecy of her missions.
- **French Government: Croix de Guerre with Palm** (Croix de Guerre avec Palme). This award was given to honor her exceptional work in organizing and supporting the French Resistance.

In addition to these, she was later inducted into the Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame (1988) and had a CIA training facility named in her honor.

Virginia's story written by Sonia Purnell will not disappoint and will hopefully enable many people like myself to uncover this unknown heroine and her truly remarkable achievements.

Main meal of the Month

Mushroom And Leek Orzo

Equipment

- 1 saucepan
- Knife
- Chopping board
- Wooden spoon or Spatula



Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus 1 tbsp extra to serve
- 250–300g mushrooms, sliced
- 2 medium leeks, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 400g/14oz orzo pasta
- 1 vegetable or chicken stock cube
- salt and black pepper

Instructions

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Add the mushrooms and the leeks and season with a pinch of salt and lots of black pepper.
3. Fry for 5 minutes and stir regularly.
4. Add the orzo and cook for a few more minutes.
5. Stir in 1.2 litres/2 pints of water and crumble in the stock cube.
6. Bring the liquid to a boil and cook for a further 12 minutes or until the orzo is soft and the sauce is thick and glossy. Similar to a risotto.
7. Stir regularly especially towards the end of cooking as the orzo can begin to stick.
8. Add touches of water if necessary to reach the right consistency.
9. Add a sprinkle of olive oil and pepper and serve!

Dessert of the Month

Sticky Gingerbread

Equipment

- Ovenproof dish
- Baking paper (or similar)
- Saucepan

Ingredients

- 150g unsalted butter
- 125g dark muscovado sugar
- 200g golden syrup
- 200g black treacle or molasses
- 2 tsp finely grated ginger
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- 250ml milk
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp of bicarbonate soda dissolved in 30ml water
- 300g plain flour



Instructions

1. Preheat 170°C/150°C Fan/325F/Gas Mark 3.
2. Line ovenproof dish with baking paper.
3. In a saucepan, melt the butter over a lowish heat along with the sugar, syrup, treacle, fresh and ground ginger, cinnamon and cloves.
4. Take off the heat and add the milk, eggs and dissolved bicarbonate of soda in its water.
5. Measure the flour into a bowl and pour in the liquid ingredients, beating until well mixed.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin.
7. Bake for 45-60 minutes until risen and firm on top.
8. Try not to overcook, as it is nicer a little stickier and, anyway, will carry on cooking as it cools.
9. Transfer the tin to a wire rack and let the gingerbread cool in the tin before cutting into 20 squares, or however you wish to slice it and enjoy!

Brain teasers

(Answers are at the end of the activity section)

- 1) What can you break even if you don't pick it up or touch it?
- 2) When it is alive we sing, when it is dead we clap, what is it?
- 3) A sundial has the fewest moving parts of any timepiece, which has the most?
- 4) What has cities but no houses, forests but no trees and water but no fish?

Puzzle

(Answers are at the end of the activity section)

Hidden in the grid below are 7 words.

• Spring • Sun • Leaves • Rain • Snow • Cozy • Fog

Where are the words?

A	S	B	T	A	I	A	R	O	N	S
O	N	U	E	T	F	G	Y	G	N	E
P	T	G	N	N	K	Z	I	N	I	V
H	N	G	I	N	O	U	R	I	F	A
R	A	O	N	C	N	I	A	R	J	E
L	A	F	B	S	N	E	A	P	V	L
M	Y	Z	I	D	W	O	N	S	G	C

Colouring



Brain teaser and puzzle answers

- 1) A promise
- 2) A birthday candle
- 3) An hourglass, it has thousands of grains of sand
- 4) A map

A	S	B	T	A	I	A	R	O	N	S
O	N	U	E	T	F	G	Y	G	N	E
P	T	G	N	N	K	Z	I	N	I	V
H	N	G	I	N	O	U	R	I	F	A
R	A	O	N	C	N	I	A	R	J	E
L	A	F	B	S	N	E	A	P	V	L
M	Y	Z	I	D	W	O	N	S	G	C

Book Safe

Equipment

- Old book
- Mod Podge Hard Coat
- Paintbrush
- Clamps or clothes pegs (optional)
- Painter's tape
- Craft knife
- Ruler



Instructions

1. Decide how deep you would like your safe to be. There was about 1 1/2" inches worth of pages in my book. I held about 1/4" worth of pages at the front of the book and then 1/4" worth of pages at the back to be the bottom.
2. Clip approximately 1/4" of pages to the front cover of the book using clothes pegs or clamps.
3. Using a ruler and pen or pencil, draw a rectangle that will be used as your cutting template. Leave at least 1/2" around all sides that will serve as the edges.
4. Clamp the pages down that you'll be cutting.
5. Using the ruler and craft knife, make cuts on the lines you drew. Go as deep as the knife will let you go; don't try to do too many pages at once. You'll be cutting out 10 – 20 pages at a time with a craft knife. Once you've cut out several pages worth, remove them.
6. Repeat cutting and removing pages until the recess is as deep as you would like, leaving at least 1/4" of pages at the back of the book.
7. To prevent the Mod Podge from seeping into the back of the book, use painter's tape to tape down the back cover. Hold up the front pages of the book in front of the recessed portion.
8. Apply Mod Podge around the pages of the book using a paintbrush. Apply one coat all the way around, let dry. Repeat.
9. To finish, apply Mod Podge to the inside rim of the recess. Go around the rim with the paintbrush and let dry. Repeat. You don't need to go on top of the pages.
10. Allow time for it to completely dry and leave the book open before using!

We've come to the end of this month's Yours Sincerely.

Thank you for reading this edition!

If you have any questions regarding this edition, would like to send in some feedback, please do not hesitate to do so using the contact details listed at the bottom of this page.

Yours Sincerely,
Freja



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