

Village

May 2026

Web





"FAMILY MEMORIES THROUGH PRECIOUS ITEMS"



Bring along and talk briefly about a family heirloom or other article from the past and its acquisition and Tim Turner (formerly of Sworders Auctioneers) will provide a historic background.

Saturday May 30th 7.00 pm
Strethall Church, CB11 4XJ

Light refreshments.

All we ask is your participation and a donation!

It promises to be an informative, entertaining and enlightening evening!!!

**18 May 2026 - final date for submission of
articles for the June edition**



The Parish of the
Icknield Way Villages

May Services 2026

SUNDAY 3

9.00am *Traditional* BCP* Communion, St Nicholas **Little Chishill**
11.00am *Contemporary* Encounter@Eleven Café Church, Village Hall **Chrishall**
6.00pm *URC* Morning service led by Sue Fender at
Great Chishill URC, Barley Road.

SATURDAY 9

4.00pm *Contemporary* iSingSaturday, Holy Trinity, **Chrishall**

SUNDAY 10

9.00am *Traditional* BCP Communion, Holy Trinity **Heydon**
11.00am *Contemporary* Encounter@Eleven St Swithun's **Great Chishill**

THURSDAY 14

7.30am *Traditional* Ascension Service Holy Trinity Chrishall

SUNDAY 17

9.00am *Traditional* BCP Communion, Hamlet Church **Duddenhoe End**
9.30am *URC* Morning Service led by Sue Fender at
Great Chishill URC, Barley Road
11.00am *Contemporary* Encounter@Eleven Holy Trinity **Chrishall**

SUNDAY 24

9.00am *Traditional* BCP Communion, St Mary's, **Strethall**
11.00am *Contemporary* Encounter@Eleven St Nicholas **Elmdon**

SUNDAY 31

10.00am *Combined* Service with a difference. Venue TBC

* BCP = Book of Common Prayer

Note: Services subject to change.

Service details, diary events and more at www.icknieldwayparish.blogspot.co.uk

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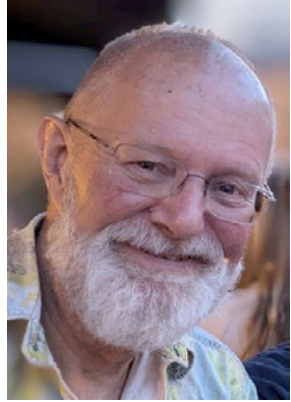
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Stingrays and Tolkien

Earlier this week I was attacked by a stingray. These things happen in life. It was a somewhat painful but also rather awkward experience which I'll happily share with you if you care to ask me in person.

We were in the Maldives, bringing trips planned for retirement forward because you never know what the future holds. However, on returning a couple of days ago I found I erroneously had next week as the deadline for Village Web articles. I spend considerable time on these, and not wanting to insult you with a



hastily composed, half-baked piece I share with you something this month written by a Vicar close to my previous parish, J. John.

He's an excellent communicator, indeed an internationally renowned speaker and evangelist, and author of several books. This is from his series "Heroes of the Faith" (*reproduced with kind permission from canonjjohn.com*), and is about J.R.R. Tolkien.

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* now stands high on any list of favourite books. Few people know that Tolkien was a Christian and that his beliefs underlie his writing.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in 1892 in what is now South Africa. When he was three, his father died, leaving him to be raised by his mother in Birmingham, England, under difficult financial circumstances. She became a Catholic and, after her early death when he was twelve, the young Tolkien was raised under the guardianship of a kindly priest. Tolkien was to remain a Catholic all his life.

From his youth, Tolkien displayed both a gift for languages and an extraordinary imagination. He began studying at Oxford University in 1911 but joined the army in 1915 to serve in World War I. He was married in 1916 but soon found himself facing the horrors of the trenches. He was spared almost certain death by contracting an infection that rendered him unfit for further frontline service. Although surviving the war, Tolkien remained scarred by it. He



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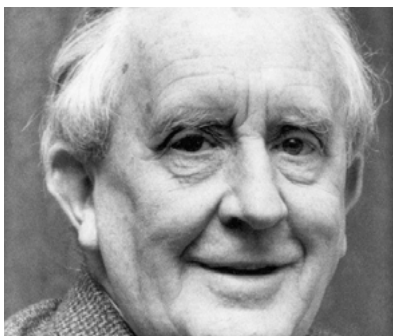
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wrote, 'By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead.'

Tolkien worked as a researcher for the Oxford English Dictionary before becoming a lecturer at Oxford. After a succession of academic positions in the following decades he eventually became Professor of English Literature and Language at Oxford.



Tolkien became close friends with

fellow professor C.S. Lewis and over the course of many conversations encouraged Lewis to shift from atheism to a strong Christian faith. With Lewis and others, Tolkien became a regular attendee of the now celebrated Oxford group the Inklings, whose members met regularly for discussion, often in a local pub.

Although Tolkien wrote a number of academic works, his extraordinary fame came from his fantasy writing. During his long wartime convalescence, he began to create his own imagined history of what he called 'Middle-earth', a part of Earth's past set somewhere between the Fall of man and the coming of Christ. Tolkien spent decades of his spare time creating in every detail his fantasy world and its peoples, and the result is an unrivalled creative achievement: a sprawling, intricate and imagined world of extraordinary richness and depth.

Tolkien had four children and he would often tell them stories which involved Middle-earth. One such story was written down and, as *The Hobbit*, was published in 1937 to instant acclaim. Tolkien's invention of hobbits – small, insignificant people with no ambition beyond a quiet life in the countryside with plenty of food – was a stroke of genius. Asked to write a sequel to *The Hobbit* Tolkien found himself writing a longer and more epic account on Middle-earth, telling how the hobbits became drawn into a great war between the forces of good against the power of evil. The story grew and the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings* were published in 1954 and 1955. Almost immediately the work attracted both outstanding devotion and intense dislike, two views that have persisted. However, *The Lord of the Rings* retains an extraordinary popularity. In the 1960s The Lord of

the Rings became a publishing phenomenon, something further encouraged subsequently by its successful filming at the beginning of this century. Tolkien worked on turning his complex and epic history of Middle-earth into a publishable form until his death in 1973, but that was only achieved by his son several decades later.

Let me draw your attention to three things about Tolkien.

First, Tolkien celebrates a *Christian vision*. *The Lord of the Rings* mentions not just a supreme being who has made the universe but also frequently implies that he, not chance or accident, is behind what happens. There are pointers, too, that this being is not simply some cold, merciless deity but rather a being rich in grace: a God who doesn't just control but also cares. Although *The Lord of the Rings* is ultimately a triumphant book, we are left in no doubt that all earthly victories over evil are merely temporary and that, one day, God will bring about a final and eternal judgement that will put everything to rights.

Second, Tolkien celebrates many *Christian virtues*. It is hard to think of any novel published in the last hundred years that so frequently praises 'doing what is right'. On page after page Tolkien reminds us of the great Christian virtues: courage, hope, joy, sacrifice, humour and friendship. We are warned that life hurts, that no one is immune to temptation, and that even the greatest victory is bittersweet.

Perhaps one of the greatest virtues the trilogy emphasises is the need to show grace and mercy, even to those – like the loathsome Gollum – who deserve nothing of the sort.

Finally, Tolkien celebrates many *Christian values*. In an age where there are no moral certainties, it's good to be reminded of the reality of good and evil. Yet here Tolkien avoids any naivety: we see good individuals corrupted and bad ones redeemed. One striking and vital theme is the value of 'the little people': ultimately it is the utterly insignificant hobbits who achieve the final victory. That's a good lesson.

The Lord of the Rings is an awesome work of the imagination. There is a delightful irony that in it Tolkien created a fantasy world far truer to reality – and far more uplifting – than most literature that claims to be realistic.

Next month: Does God heal today?

With love and best wishes,



Passing the Plate... to Whom?

The Icknield Way Parish is blessed with strong leadership, a hugely supportive team of volunteers forming the Parochial Church Council as well as the local leadership and support provided by seven district wardens and the local District Church Councils.

Alongside the work undertaken in our village halls; school and elsewhere across the parish our seven church buildings serve as focal points and are open to visitors every day, whether to attend services, for the peace and quiet of private contemplation and prayer, or to attend events or concerts. They are simply wonderful assets supported and enjoyed over generations.

As Parish Treasurer I am regularly asked how much money we receive from the Government or the Church of England to pay for it all. The answer to the former is “none” and the latter is “almost none”. The entire funding for the Church is from the generosity and support of those in our community.

Technically the funding for ministers comes from the Chelmsford Diocese, which covers all of Essex and a significant part of East London. 80% of the Diocese income is used to fund current and future parish clergy and licensed ministers. The primary source (74%) of that income is from Parishes like ours through an annual contribution – the Parish Share. In the Icknield Way Parish we receive more than we give.

So who decides how much our “share” is?

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. *Romans 12 v 4-5*

To make the Diocese manageable it is divided into Deaneries. We belong to Saffron Walden Deanery, which has less than seven full time vicars serving some 33 Parish Churches. James has the highest “Churches to Vicar” ratio in the Deanery.

The calculation of our share is made using a transparent formula meaning that we can see that fairness has been applied. Using a combination of total population and economic factors the Deanery

work with Parishes to agree suitable levels of Parish Share. In the last five years the Deanery has supported us with a lower Parish Share request to reflect some of the local challenges we have faced. Others in the Deanery have provided additional support and given more than first asked to ensure the Deanery meets the overall request from the Diocese.

Funding arrives in a number of ways – regular donors giving through standing orders (if every household in the Parish donated 50p a day either to their local church or the Parish we would meet our full Parish Share and cover the running costs of all our buildings), from collection plates at services, legacy gifts left in wills (each Church in our Parish has benefited from such gifts in the past, many of which continue to provide income now) or from supporting specific fund-raising events through the year.

Whether you give to your local church in support of the building, to the Parish to support the wider work of the Church, including our ambitions for an increased range of youth work, Thank You. If you would like to discuss how you can support the work of the Church or to discuss legacy giving please contact me in confidence.

Laurence Brett

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Hidden in Plain Sight

The archaeology of Elmdon, like the other villages of the parish, is ancient and diverse. The church of St Nicholas occupies what is believed to be a partly man-made platform within the village, and Roman funerary pottery has been discovered around the church suggesting activity in the area. Unlike some of the other villages, there is no evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity, with the first reference to a church being in 1179.

It is not certain if any of this 1179 church remains, with some reference to a small lancet window in the west of the tower, but no other traces. The current church is understood to be built upon 14th century foundations, and there is other archaeological activity within Elmdon dating to this height of the mediaeval period – a ringwork that while unexcavated lends itself to the interpretation of a Norman Motte, and two moated sites.

The only surviving original mediaeval features of the church are the 15th century west tower, featuring a west facing window and doorway both in the perpendicular style, and a perpendicular tower archway. While it is incredibly common for a parish church to have been restored and altered during the 19th and 20th centuries, St Nicholas underwent three separate rebuilding phases – the nave and aisles in 1852, the chancel in 1879 and the south chapel in 1905 – meaning that most of the fabric of the church is Victorian or later. All of the rebuilding, however, is done in the height of the neo-gothic architectural style, and is therefore a beautiful homage to a medieval parish church, and may contain traces of the previous church building.

Some such traces are a 1532 and a 1559 brass on either side of the chancel (often covered with rugs to prevent contact damage), and a beautifully decorated tomb chest from 1585. All three of these burials



West Wall of Tower

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being in such close proximity to the altar table suggests that they belonged to wealthy individuals or those considered important to the community.

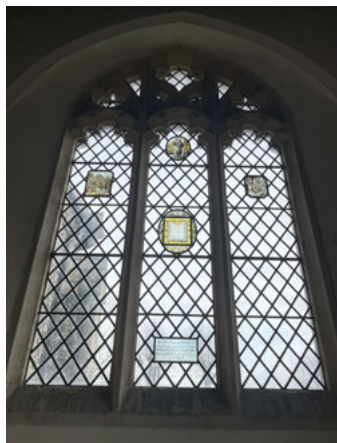
Much of the tracery in the windows, the octagonal piers of the arcades, and the piscina in the south wall of the lady chapel are all in the decorated style of the 14th century, most likely inspired by the 14th century church which was rebuilt (although this is my own speculation).

This is not the only reference back to an earlier church in the building, however, as on the external walls of the church there is red tile used in decorative patterns, emulating the way Roman brickwork was used in both Roman and Anglo-Saxon stone buildings.

Elmdon church also holds a few fragments of the previous St Dunstan's church of Wendens Loft, which was made redundant in 1958. Resting against the wall at the base of the tower is a 16th century brass which is often overlooked. However, what is more well known, are the fragments of 17th century stained glass contained in the east window of the lady chapel including the 'Elmdon Dial', a glass depiction of a sundial which lent its name to the previous pub in the village.

Much like the other churches of the parish, as a historic building, proposals have been submitted to refurbish the church to support the needs of the community. These proposals include: rehanging the bells, as they are currently un-ringable due to stress fractures in the tower; removing pews in the back of the nave to create a mezzanine floor for events; and turning the lady chapel, which currently holds a book exchange, into an exhibition space. These refurbishments would be fantastic and breathe new life into the church, allowing it to flourish as a building for the people rather than crumbling and becoming redundant.

Sophie Williams



East Window of Lady Chapel

Honeybee Swarming Season

April is the time when honeybees start to swarm. There are many reasons why they do this but the main one is congestion within the hive. The queen bee will lay hundreds of eggs a day and it can become very tightly packed, as from the queen laying an egg it will take 21 days for the worker to emerge.

When you see a swarm, don't panic.

The last thing they want to do is to sting you. They are just looking for a new home. They will land on any suitable place to rest and protect the queen while the scout bees are looking for a new home.

This is where I come in, as a British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) Swarm Collector, to assist these wonderful insects in finding a new safe and warm home to continue their life cycle.

If you have a swarm of bees in your garden, call me on 07930 949299 and I shall be more than happy to take them away to a new home. I shall also have a spare suit and gloves if you would like to get involved.

There are two types of hornets in this country: the European hornet and an invasive Asian hornet.

Asian hornets have come over from France or the Channel Islands. They attack our honeybees for food and can destroy apiaries very quickly. The difference between the two species is that the Asian hornet's back legs are yellow, whereas the European hornet has dark ends to its legs. On no account should you try to capture them as their stings are very bad. If you do see an Asian hornet, it is reportable to DEFRA.

Please note: This is a free service but I will not be collecting any other insect apart from honeybees.

Jeff Miles



In a Nutshell

The Men's Group will meet at the Red Cow, Chrishall on **Thursday 7 May at 8pm**.

Great Chishill Coffee Morning at St Swithun's **13 May, 10am–12pm**.

Church Mice baby and toddler group meet each **Tuesday 9.30am – 11.00am at Chrishall Village Hall**. Toys, craft, snacks, music, stories and more! Everyone welcome.

At the **URC** in Great Chishill, **The King's Men** are coming to sing and entertain us on **Friday 5th June at 7.30pm**. For tickets please contact Tess on 07721398642 or tessgent@gmail.com.

Also at the **URC** in Great Chishill on **Sunday 7th June at 4.30pm** it will be **PIMMS O'CLOCK** with Sip, Sing and Snack. Everyone very welcome. **FREE HOSPITALITY**.

Save the Date. The annual **Summer Barn Dance** arranged by the parish bellringers will be on **Friday 26th June**, Great Chishill Village Hall with dancing to the Cambridge University Ceilidh Band. Details of tickets to follow in next issue.

Madagascar: Readers may recall The Brock family of Elmdon. Their eldest daughter, Rosie, together with her husband and 3 children are in the process of preparing to travel to the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara, as part of the missionary team, with an initial commitment of two years. A huge decision the family, who are feeling increasingly confident in God's leading to this place. They would welcome your prayers for this preparation phase.

Saturday Gathering. We are delighted to welcome back Rich Carding, Youth minister at Little Shelford for our next Saturday Gathering from 4.30pm on **6th June** (*see ad on inside cover*). Rich will be addressing the subject of **courage**. Our parish bellringers are offering a taster session, immediately afterwards, for youngsters to take courage and have a go at pulling on the ropes!

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Treasured Tracks



This month's special guest is Gary Lashko, who writes about significant music tracks woven through his life

1. The only music I associate with my father is a Russian folk song called "**Beriozka**", about a birch tree, in the last movement of a well worn record of Tchaikovsky's 4th symphony.

2. My mother, who sang traditional German folksongs out of tune all day long, was much more musical and liked strong melodic male voices like Benjamino Gigli (who once sang Ave Maria for her). **Cliff Richard's "Summer Holiday"** from the film we saw together, sums up a childhood playing outside joyfully in the sunshine (which in my memory was always shining).

3. **Mozart's Requiem** (Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields) played over and over, as I drove to see my father's body, after he died suddenly, 3 days before the birth of our second child, Eleanor.

4. "**How Great Thou Art**" the hymn belted out by my mother at full volume in her screechy voice at his funeral. I couldn't bring myself to sing it at her own funeral six years later.

5. Although I seem to gravitate towards elegiac music, let's turn to happier moments. My first "pop" album was Jethro Tull's "This Was" with its mad album cover filled with dogs and its crazy prog rock flute playing and references to older folk music. But my musical Damascene moment came when working in WH Smith's record department in Leicester, the exciting new sound of Roxy Music's first, eponymous album of art rock music, the song **Virginia Plain** with its retro saxophone and oboe and its futuristic synthesizers, and clever

ambiguous meanings and glamorous visuals. The magical poetries of Leonard Cohen, Joan Baez, and of the Velvet Underground also captivated me.

6 Waldo De Los Rios's pop version of **Mozart's 40 symphony** (1971) sparked my interest in classical music, and at first I liked the clean sounds and precision of performers like Maurizio Pollini (Chopin). My tastes began to mellow to appreciate Segovia on guitar (unforgettable live), I felt the power of the Emil Gilels playing the two Brahms piano concertos (The opening of Concerto No 1 still gives me goosebumps).

7. Now there are two obsessional pieces and performances: Schubert's final chamber work, the **String Quintet in C major** sometimes called the "Cello Quintet" because it is scored for a with an extra cello instead of the extra viola which is more usual in quintets. The slow movement is for me what the entrance music to heaven should be. The other music I listened to over and over was the similarly divine music and performance of Sviatoslav Richter 'In Concert' (2004) particularly the four Schubert sonatas.

8. At university in Cambridge, one of my best friends was a jazz drummer and poet, and he introduced me to the Be Bop of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, we then explored the later 1950s and 1960's modern jazz classics including Miles Davis and John Coltrane. The music that stuck with me most was Ornette Coleman's **Change of the Century**. A wonderful exciting and energetic melange of fast melodic, tumultuous music delivered with cool control, and a rhythmic overdrive

9 Starting a young family in London, I had less time and money to explore music. I was buoyed up by the muscular blues of Otis Redding, and the amazing vocals of Marvin Gaye ("Let's Get it On" is a beautiful, controlled yet powerfully emotional tour de force.), but it was the divas that drove my emotions along and refreshed my soul: Sade, India Arie, Aretha Franklin, Billy Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Dolly Parton, Lutricia McNeal ("My Side of Town"). But when my darling wife, Sheena, helped me through some difficult times at work, her support was associated in my mind with the music of Gabrielle particularly the album and song "**Rise**".

Nowadays, I don't really listen to much music, but do enjoy jazz concerts (Cambridge Modern Jazz) and the acts at the wonderful Saffron Hall (e.g. The Sixteen, and The Tallis Scholars). However, pulling

together this list has revealed how important music has been to me
Luxury item; a large framed portrait of my family.

Book choice: Bertrand Russell's "History of Western Philosophy" (to see if I could remember some of it this time round!)

Our Place in the Universe

I have been contemplating the universe lately as I have been following the journey of the Artemis Space Mission, led by NASA. The goal of Artemis is to send humans back to the Moon and eventually prepare for future journeys to Mars.

This has led me to wonder why humans would want to live anywhere else than this amazing world we have on Earth.

Christian Koch, one of the Artemis astronauts called Earth a "lifeboat hanging undisturbedly in the universe."

A life boat! A lifeboat is something that carries people safely through danger. It has limited space and resources, so everyone on board must work together, share, and take care of what they have. In the same way, Earth provides everything we need—air, water, food, and shelter—but these resources are not unlimited.

From a Christian perspective, this connects to the idea of stewardship. It also reminds us that everyone is in the same situation. Just like people on a lifeboat depend on one another, all humans depend on the Earth—and on each other—for survival.

This should encourage us to kindness, cooperation, and responsibility. This term as we celebrate Earth Day in school, we will remember: we are all in this lifeboat together. By caring for the Earth and each other, we live out our faith and help protect God's creation for future children to enjoy.

Fiona Dyer

Teacher Chrishall Primary School



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Alpha Experience

Gillian Philpott writes : I was apprehensive prior to the start of the Alpha course but wanted to give it a go. I am so very glad I did!! I enjoyed the company of the group and the relaxed atmosphere and sharing of food allowed me to forget daily life and enjoy the moment. Watching the videos, sharing views and thoughts without any pressure was very special and I learned a lot about myself. The sessions became the highlight of my weeks and helped me focus my mind on how I can move forward in my faith. I am so grateful for the experience.

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AT

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SG8 8QU

SATURDAY 9TH MAY

(next event Saturday 4th July 4pm)

Parish Contacts - *Telephone codes are 01763 unless stated*

Rector: Revd Dr James Webster,
The Rectory, 48 Heydon Road, Great Chishill, Royston SG8 8SR
email: iwp.pariahrector@gmail.com Mobile 07840 329279

Church Office:

Mon, Wed and Fri 9am to 1pm - Church Office, Crawley End, Chrishall, Royston, Herts
SG8 8QL Tel: 837272 Email: iwp.pariahoffice@gmail.com

Parish Church Wardens:

Jon Wayper 01799 732045 Email: jwayper@hotmail.com
Liz Stott 01799 521217 Email: lizstott13@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Fiona Dyer Tel: 07854 602373 Email: iwp.safeguarding@gmail.com

District Wardens:

Chrishall – David Wilkinson 837303 Elmdon – Ned Tozer 07831346974
Gt Chishill – Angela Patrick Sutcliffe 837353 Hamlet – Sarah Westerhuis
Heydon – Mel Chandler 838289 07739550061
Strethall – Liz Stott 01799 521217 Lt Chishill – Nicola Perring 07984309497

Children's and Youth Work: Contact office - 837272

Treasurer: Laurence Brett Tel: 838167 Email: laurencebrett@icloud.com

<p>Donations: Barclays Bank – Name: IWP-Trust Account Sort: 20-73-26 Account: 40898023</p>
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Tower Bell Ringing: For all towers please contact the church office 837272

Handbell Ringing: Mel Chandler 838289 or Helen Whitehead 07914 152444

Chrishall Primary School: Head Teacher Tracey Bratley Tel: 838592

URC Secretary: Angus Gent Tel: 07885307301 email: angusgent@gmail.com

Village Web Magazine Team:

Editor: iwp.webeditor@gmail.com

Advertising: Guy Lawrenson iwp.villageweb.ads@gmail.com

Parish Office: 837272 - iwp.pariahoffice@gmail.com

Mel Chandler 838289

Alison Wilkinson 837303



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**Entrance £5 Per Person (children free). Maps, Programme
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Distributed free by volunteers to all the homes in the Parish of the Icknield Way Villages - Chrishall, Elmdon with Wenden Lofts, Duddenhoe End, Great Chishill, Little Chishill, Heydon and Strehall.