



ARE YOU BEING SCAMMED?

We wouldn't get caught out by a scam would we? Surely, we'd realise the message we received had something wrong with it. Yes, it's true that sometimes the scam may be obvious – but not always.

So, what are the latest scams we should be aware of?

Your errant child sends you a text saying they need some money. That may not be unusual. In fact, it may be the norm. But would they call you "Mom"? Would they ask for money without trying to butter you up first? If we think about it, we know the style of writing our good friends and family use when they text us – so if it doesn't sound like the person you know, then it probably isn't them. Even if the text claims to be from them. And if you don't know them well enough to know how they write, then should they be asking you for money or vouchers in the first place?



How about a text from an unknown number saying:

Hi, its Jane, Hope you ok. I'm just letting you know this is my new number so you can delete my old number. Can you text me so I know you have it ok. X

If you know Jane well you might find the text odd and check with Jane, but if they're not a close friend you might accept it. This will then be the start of several texts building trust and then there will be a text asking for help. Financial help. Would we be that

gullible? Surely, we'd actually check with Jane. Except we deleted Jane's number. Hmm. Perhaps we should have checked with Jane when she first asked us to delete her number.

Beware of flattery. Pride can come before a fall. Let's say you've commented on a post about dancing dogs on Facebook and an attractive person, let's call her Nadine, replies to your comment to say how impressed she is by you and by your profile. She'd love to get to know you better.

Before you engage in conversation with Nadine, ask yourself this – why is this stranger contacting me? If you think your comment on the dancing dogs was so inspirational that you can understand her interest in you, and you're tempted to bask in her praise but you're not quite convinced, then you could check her profile. You may find that she only set up her Facebook account two days ago and has no friends or posts of her own.

Hmm. Perhaps the friendly Nadine is someone parading as Nadine. Don't reply to her – certainly don't give her your personal details. Instead block her and report her. And if it's too late, and you did reply, when she responds saying 'let's chat in private', block her and report her then.

How about those fun posts on Facebook asking what your favourite colour is? Or your favourite teacher. The name of your first pet. Have a think when you were last asked those questions. Chances are they were security questions you were asked when setting up an account. Perhaps the posts aren't just fun posts. It's safer not to share personal information about yourself online and it is always a good idea to check your privacy settings.

To help avoid scams:

- When you get a message – think, does it sound right? Are they asking for money?
- Don't rush to answer – take your time to think about how genuine the message is.
- Check with the person who's claiming to send the message – phone them and ask if it's them messaging you.
- If it is a scam, you can report it to Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 08082231133

Chiara Saunders

GET GROWING!

The Blythburgh Horticultural Society has elected Sonia Boggis as the new Secretary for the Horticultural Society, and we're delighted to welcome Sonia on board.

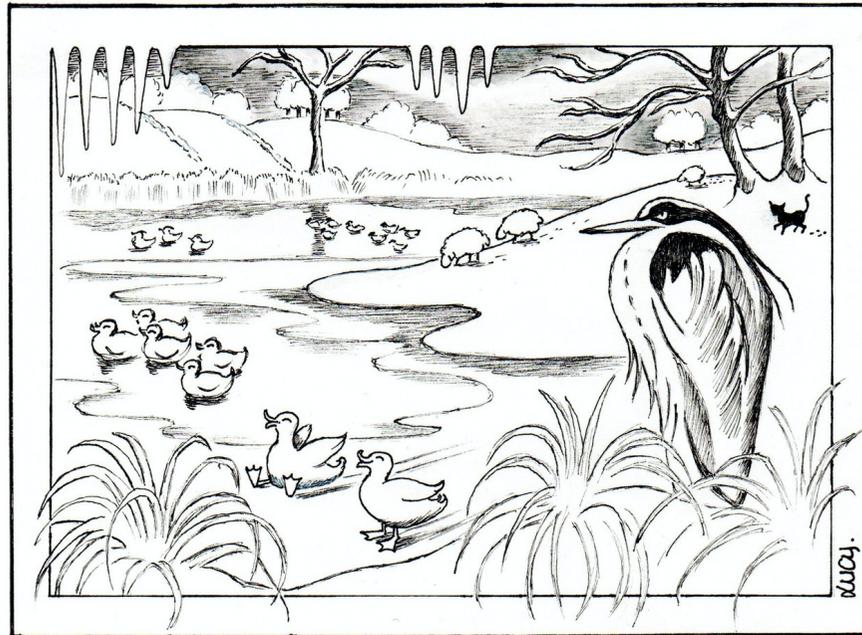
We also have a 2022 programme and look forward to welcoming members to the variety of events that we originally had planned for 2020.

Our popular summer show will be held in Blythburgh Church on Saturday 6 August – a bit later in the year than usual. There'll be a variety of classes to enter: vegetables, flower arrangements, and cookery, and we look forward to seeing plenty of entries. The summer show is open to everyone, not just Hort Soc members.

If you'd like to join the Horticultural Society, please get in touch with me (details below), membership is a bargain at £5 a year! If you'd like to know more please do get in touch.

Val Carse

Chair, Blythburgh Horticultural Society
valc@btinternet.com



BLYTHBURGH TALES

A Suffolk Coast Garland was published 94 years ago, so it might seem a bit daft to review it now, since it's not readily available. But one of the less obvious joys of internet shopping is browsing antiquarian book sites – and this was a birthday present that proved surprisingly illuminating.

Its author, Ernest Cooper was something of an amateur historian and a columnist for the *Eastern Daily Press*, the *East Anglian Daily Times* and *The Blue Peter*, a long defunct publication described as “the magazine of sea travel”. He lived in Southwold, and was fascinated by the history of our coastline. He wrote when the activities of smugglers were significant influencing factors on Suffolk coastal life. Fishing – especially for migratory herring, was still a major employer.

More surprising to me, though were his illuminating disclosures about Blythburgh and its Priory. He noted that the Priory was founded in 1130, and that by 1473 there were only three resident monks and a prior. At the time of Richard II, he wrote, the right of fishery was granted by the Lord of Blythburgh and Walberswick, allowing the Canons of Blythburgh to “fish with nets three times a week from the bridge of Bulcampe to the bridge of Kampisbregge”.

Cooper said it was Blythburgh tradition that Cardinal Wolsey received part of his education at Blythburgh Priory. Given he went up to Oxford at eleven, it must have been at a pretty early age. He noted that it was Wolsey who, in 1528, obtained papal permission for suppression of Blythburgh Priory, and the application of its funds to his college at Ipswich. So, maybe the Cardinal had had little in the way of fond memories of his stay at Blythburgh Priory.

According to Cooper, Blythburgh was recorded as the home of the local jail. The Quarter Sessions took place at the White Hart, and both a windmill and a watermill served the resident monks. He wrote that in 1520 “the Prior and canons received the Bishop in a certain Chapel of the Priory which they used as a chapter house. This would probably be the old cottage within recent years restored by Mr Seymour-Lucas during whose excavations a whalebone tablet used for writing on wax was found”. So perhaps the chapel (in our house on Priory Road) actually was a chapel originally, or at least a chapter house?

The rest of the book focuses on stirring salty tales of smuggling, the Dutch wars, lifeboatmen and pilots. It's all gripping stuff, if something of a miscellany. But it was the chapter on Blythburgh and the priory that grabbed me. Almost a century on, this is still a great read.

Matthew Saunders

BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

Mid-November saw the appearance of a very local Northern visitor on the Blyth, a second winter Glaucous Gull, which frequented the Bus Creek area.

Although many people treat it as a noxious weed, Ivy is an extremely essential plant, being the last major nectar source of the year and enormously important for Bumble Bees, Hoverflies and other late flying insects, while the berries provide food for many bird species, being especially loved by Wood Pigeons, Thrushes and, more surprisingly, small birds such as Robins.

Late November and December saw a regular Great White Egret and several flocks of Golden Plover on the Blyth, as well as increasing numbers of Avocet. It is believed that these birds are from the Dutch population as some evidence shows that our local breeding Avocet winters in the South West of England.

The mild winter as been exceptionally poor for winter visitors, but early January saw the arrival of Redwings and Fieldfare in the parish, while wader numbers increased on the Blyth, particularly Grey Plover, Knot and Avocet. On 9 January, a Spotted Redshank was seen, a bird which is now a very scarce overwinter visitor. Both the Peregrine and the Glaucous Gull have also still been seen occasionally.

Winter duck numbers are down in number, especially Wigeon and Pintail, while goose numbers on the coast are in general at their lowest for many years. Bean Geese have not even been reported, after our flock just outside the village last year. The only goose in good numbers is Barnacle Geese with a flock of over 700 on the coast. With numbers this high, it obviously includes some of the Dutch wintering population. Also, with them has been at least one Richardson's Crackling Goose, a tiny form of Canada Goose.

I. Nonowt



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MARKS FOR – OR AGAINST – THE DEVIL

The legend of Black Shuck – the huge, ghostly hound which roamed the coastline and countryside of Suffolk – is well known. It's become so much part of Blythburgh folklore that many, maybe most, visitors who arrive in our distinguished church ask about the story.

In summary – so the story goes – in 1577, the congregation had just settled down for the priest's Sunday sermon when, accompanied by a clap of thunder, Black Shuck burst through the heavy oak doors. The shaggy beast, with dripping fangs and malevolent red eyes, ran down the nave aisle, pausing only to snap the necks of an old man and a young boy, before bounding towards the terrified clergyman, its eyes fixed and flaming.

A few feet short of the altar table, the infernal creature seemed to disappear into thin air. The congregation had hardly regained their wits when a great rumble sounded from the foundation of the church. Cracks splintered along the walls and the steeple gave way, crashing through the nave.

In a desperate bid to escape, Black Shuck scabbled at the north door, leaving its claw marks, scorched into the woodwork.

The scorch marks are there for anyone to see. But no-one really believes they were made by the Devil's dog. So, what are they? A recent study by Sheffield Hallam University has discovered a long and ancient history of "witch marks", a variety of markings which have been made to ward off evil. Some of these are figures or symbols etched into surfaces, but sometimes they were burn marks.

These were made by a candle or taper held against timber long enough to create a tear-shaped mark. This was a form of magic whereby exposing timber to a deliberate flame could prevent a more disastrous blaze of the type which regularly destroyed medieval buildings.

Experimental archaeology has confirmed these markings couldn't have been created accidentally. Burn or scorch marks were evil-averting, and large numbers have been found in the kitchens of Haddon Hall in Derbyshire and the King's Tower at Knole in Kent, both dating from the 17th century.

The Hallam University researchers believe that scorch marks on the door of Blythburgh Church may be a similar "apotropaic" activity. It's fascinating, and ironic to think that rather than being made by forces of evil, they were actually placed there to ward off the dark designs of the supernatural!

Meryl Doney



The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust makes grants to individual parishioners, families and organisations to meet specific needs.

For your grant, contact the honorary administrator, **Jim Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, (478 687)**

All applications will be treated in complete confidence.

Apply now

The trustees are **Jenny Allen, chair, Sarah Wickham, Michael Nicholls, Val Carse, Malcolm Doney and Harry Waller.**

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Planning Advisory Committee:
Val Carse, Paul Lacey

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Roderick Orr-Ewing, Chiara Saunders, Al Besly

Councillors: Malcolm Doney,

Clerk: Al Besly

Blythburgh Associations

Blythburgh Latitude Trust
Jim Boggis 01502 478687

Film Club
Olive Forsythe 01502 478521

Village Hall Management Committee
bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk

Horticultural Society
Val Carse 07973 389898

Blythburgh Matters
Ro Williams 01502 478484

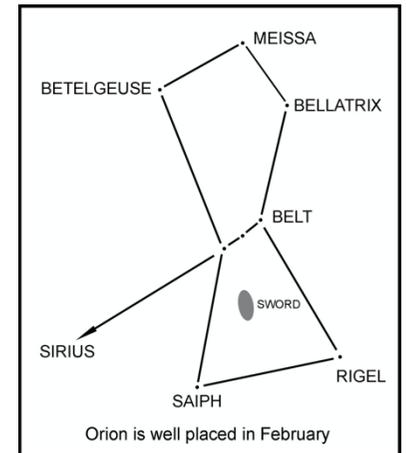
Blyth Belles
Sarah Wickham blythbelles@gmail.com

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Orion (the Hunter) is easy to find and is well positioned in February. It is in the south east from about 6pm, and due south by 8pm. Although the moon will be close by during the second week of the month, the main stars are still bright enough to be seen.

Orion is an impressive sight with the stars Saiph and Rigel representing the hunter's knees, Betelgeuse and Bellatrix his shoulders, and the slightly dimmer Meissa his head. The three central stars in a diagonal line are his belt. However, as with all things in the night sky, they are so much more interesting if you know a little about what you are looking at.

Betelgeuse is the best known star. It shines with a red hue and is one of the largest stars visible to the naked eye, being around 1,000 times larger the Sun. It is also variable, meaning that its brightness varies from time to time. Betelgeuse is towards the end of its life and in 2019-20 it dimmed more than usual, indicating that it might soon explode and become a supernova. It has since brightened again, but it is still expected to explode sometime in the next 100,000 years. When this does happen, it will possibly outshine the moon and be visible during daylight.



Rigel is another interesting star. It is a huge blue supergiant. Although it appears as a single star, what we see as Rigel is actually a system of at least four stars. While we think of our Sun as being a typical star, with no close neighbours, it is thought that more than half of all Sun-like stars are part of multiple star systems.

Below the three stars making up Orion's belt, you can see a glowing patch which represents his sword. This area includes the Orion Nebula, a stellar nursery where around 700 stars are in various stages of formation.

Finally, the bright object in a line from the belt towards the horizon is Sirius. This is part of the Canis Major constellation. It is the brightest star in the night sky and the closest visible from the northern hemisphere. Sirius is actually a two star (binary) system, with the stars orbiting each other every 50 years.

Colin Huggins



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DAISY BANK CIII

My Christmas card this year seemed to be ok. But when I hung it in our inglenook fireplace space I realised there were two mistakes. The tree line near Milo's nose was confusing and blurred his image, and the shadow of the window frame above B's teddy's head was too defined. I have adjusted both and below is the corrected version. Doing things from imagination and not



from reality is fraught with danger. Spitting drops of blood would define how I felt about it. Too late of course now, but a constant reminder of thinking I was a 'clever clog' which I am obviously not! I'll try harder next year, says he optimistically.

Now all I've got to do is to hang on grimly until the beginning of February when the Six Nations start followed in March by FI. January can hide itself somewhere as far as I am concerned; it's of no interest to me. I remember losing my wallet on a train to Liverpool many years ago; it was Friday 13th of course. Several months later it was retrieved in Glasgow, intact, with money and sent to my parents address home in Surrey. I was 'away' for nearly a year before I saw it again. Several other more painful events have happened in January over the years so let's hope it remains hidden again for this year.

Every fortnight I go next door to my neighbour Derek and we drink a few drams together. He remembers some of the history of Blythburgh before it's lost for ever and I keep him and Lily laughing with some of my tales and anecdotes. Linden, their dog, is not keen on having to give up his chair on these occasions but eventually we come to an accommodation and share it together. A good time is had by all.

Our milk bill has gone up by 2p a pint and, sad to say, eventually it will inevitably be too much for the dairies and farms who deliver bottled milk – and they will disappear. How can they possibly compete with the supermarkets? But we will soldier on and continue to look forward to the clinking of bottles at five in the morning. Lily and Derek also get deliveries and sometime its handy for them to order other stuff like bread from the same milkman. Like the postman who will also eventually fade away, they provide a positive contact with people who find it difficult to leave their cosy homes.

Come on Boris, do something positive for once and help the dairy farmers and the post office to carry on their good work. It's not all about money! And yes, I know I've banged on about this before, but it's important.

Afterthought: did you spot the mouse in the card?

Paul Bennett

Wishing Southwold Ladies a successful season 2021/2022



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CHURCH BACK TO NORMAL (ISH)

We're back in what passes for routine, following the flurry of Christmas. Despite the potential shadow thrown by Omicron, we had an aggregate attendance of more than 200 across our Christmas activities. And it was a delight to be able to sing (something we were unable to do last year). We raised over £900 pounds for our Christmas charities: Save the Children, helping children around the world in times of crisis, and Home Start Suffolk, the county's largest family support charity.

Our Christmas market was a huge success: although footfall was down compared with pre-Covid times, we reckon it was visited by more than 250 people and raised a welcome £470 after expenses. Stall holders expressed themselves delighted with being back.

With so many visitors, our new plantation of trees in the church car park did its job in helping create some order out of potential car parking chaos.



Holy Trinity's Food Bank collection point continues to be well-supported, not least by the generous initiative of two local boys, Bruno, who lives in Blythburgh, and his friend Edgar. Last year, they raised £130 from their sale of a bumper crop of homegrown pumpkins from Bruno's allotment. They used the proceeds to buy products for the Lowestoft Food Bank, which they deposited in Blythburgh church. Good work Bruno and Edgar, and thank you for your generosity!

We're looking forward to welcoming concerts back into the church this year – no fewer than five have been booked as part of the Aldeburgh Festival in June. But before that, we are welcoming the Ipswich Choral Society on Saturday 9 April. They will be singing Bach's St John Passion accompanied by a small orchestra. Details of how to obtain tickets should be available in the next issue.



LATITUDE TICKET POLICY REVIEWED

In 2020, the trustees of the Blythburgh Latitude Trust made some changes to how Blythburgh residents apply for Latitude Festival tickets, in order to conform more closely with the terms and conditions laid down by the promoters of Latitude, and in order to maintain fairness and transparency. Principally, this meant making them available to full-time residents only. However, the 2020 Festival did not go ahead.

For 2021, they modified the process, and instituted a two-stage ballot which would give full-time residents priority, but also open up ticket access to part-time residents. In the first ballot, tickets were offered to full-time residents of the Blythburgh with Bulcamp & Hinton parish. Each full-time resident could apply for one ticket for their personal use and also for one ticket for each full-time resident in their household. The second ballot was open to: a) full-time residents who would like to pass their tickets onto family or friends; b) people who own property in the parish but who don't live here full time. We put our proposals to Festival Republic, and they confirmed that they were happy with them.

We instituted this programme for the 2021 Festival, with applications opened at random by members of the Latitude Trust. In the event, everyone who applied for tickets, whether full-time residents or not, were able to obtain the tickets they requested, so a second ballot was not required.

However, even though the two stage-ballot was not necessary in this case, the trustees feel that the relatively low level of applications may be a result of the pandemic, and that it provided useful experience for the future. So, in reviewing the process, they have decided to continue with this ticket allocation policy for the 2022 Festival.

For Latitude 2021, Festival Republic issued tickets by email (previously Blythburgh Latitude Trust distributed them physically). There were teething problems with this, but anomalies were sorted out before the Festival began. We do not know whether Festival Republic will retain the e-ticket system in the future.

If you have questions about the allocation of Latitude tickets, please contact the Blythburgh Latitude Trust: blythburgh.trust@gmail.com.

WILDWATCH

During the winter, my cottage and garden have been playing host to a few uninvited, but still welcome, guests. These are the wild animals that have taken to living in, or around, our homes and settlements.

While some creatures have evolved to hibernate or go into a temporary torpor, others have to stay active. These include squirrels and all our resident birds. They rely on generous, friendly humans putting out nuts, seeds and fat during the months when natural food is in short supply. Those that go into a temporary torpor include the smaller animals that find shelter within our walls and out-houses. Several species of butterfly overwinter as adult insects or a chrysalis, seeking places that are cool but frost-free. Ladybirds and some flies do the same, along with spiders. In the days before homes were centrally heated, many a little-used room provided safe refuge for a myriad of creatures to pass the coldest months in safety.

Animals that rely on the warmth of the sun to be active also have to find frost-free places in which to spend the winter. Reptiles and amphibians, being cold-blooded, cannot generate body heat from their food. When temperatures drop, they seek places where they can lie dormant until spring. If you think you might have lizards, snakes or frogs in your garden, placing a small sheet of corrugated iron or roofing felt in a quiet corner will give them somewhere to shelter.

Putting out food for the birds does, however, attract some creatures we'd prefer stayed out of the garden. Grey squirrels, sometimes called 'tree-rats', have learned to exploit bird feeders. Having ankles that can be turned backwards, means they can hang down from the hook that holds a feeder. Their agility and intelligence has enabled them to remain well-fed, even working out how to solve so-called squirrel-proof food dispensers.

By and large though, I don't begrudge these other animals living at my expense during the cold and hungry months of the year. The odd spider or ladybird, tucked up in a corner of the bedroom, isn't going to get in my way.

Even the grey squirrels that knock down my bird feeders from time-to-time deserve a break during the winter months. I've drawn the line at inviting them in, but I have taken to what's called 'diversionary feeding'.

They have a separate table to themselves – with a 'reserved' sign on it.

Paul Lacey

Grey squirrel showing backward facing ankles



THE BEAST OF THE EAST

The drive from Blythburgh to Yoxford just got a whole lot more interesting. In November, a 26-foot tall bronze statue was erected on marshland to the front of Cockfield Hall. *Yoxman*, made of 52 separate pieces, weighs in at 8 tonnes and is one of the largest bronzes to be cast in England in recent years.

Cockfield Hall, on the right as you approach the 30 mile an hour speed sign on the outskirts of Yoxford, has both a long history and an early association with Blythburgh. Around 1440, the hall and estate were purchased by John Hopton who had unexpectedly inherited various estates including Westwood estate at Blythburgh. This same John Hopton is buried alongside his first wife in the Hopton Tomb in Holy Trinity Blythburgh.

John Hopton's great-grandson, Sir Arthur Hopton, was the builder of Cockfield Hall in its current Tudor brick form. Much more recently, in 2014, Cockfield Hall was purchased by Jon Hunt as part of his Wilderness Reserve and it was he who commissioned *Yoxman*.

The figure is the creation of local sculptor Laurence Edwards who spent 4 years working on *Yoxman* in his studio and large-scale foundry in Halesworth. Edwards' work explores the relationship between humans and nature, and he built organic materials ("detritus of leaves, branches, stone & rope") into the casting process for the giant piece.

In much the same way, he used "mud, wood and hogweed" for the 14-foot wide *Altar Sculpture* which stands under the east window in Blythburgh church.

Yoxman is many things to many people. I asked around and discovered some interesting views: P who lives near Yoxman said "he needs to put some pants on before there is an accident", S said she had spotted "a facial likeness to Prince Charles" and J said he was "in awe of the skills possessed by Laurence Edwards". So, maybe the bottom line is that *Yoxman* is bold and different, something to make us "stop, stand and stare"; something to make us consider, ask questions and, yes, something that just might make us smile just because it's there.

Laurence Edwards is also creator of a number of other works including *A Thousand Tides* in Butley Creek and the *Creek Men* once at Snape.

Sonia Boggis



Photo courtesy of Bill Jackson

THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE – WHAT WILL BLYTHBURGH DO?

With the Jubilee looming on the horizon, the Parish Council approached Blythburgh resident Ro Williams – who has a history of organising successful events in the village – to generate some ideas.

In the first week of February, she corralled a group of villagers to think about how the parish might celebrate Her Majesty's 70-year reign. Jenny, Allen, Roselyn Crane, Meryl Doney, Mary Gundry and Ro Williams met and came up with a series of initial ideas.

These suggestions – and they are just suggestions – are up for discussion. If you have a viable idea not covered below, please talk to one of these people (if you happen to know them). Alternatively, you could email Ro Williams at ro@blythburgh.plus.com.

Also, Colin Huggins – our *Blythburgh Focus* Astral correspondent and go-to photographer – is developing a survey which will be circulated around the village to ask residents what they'd like to see.

In the meantime, these are the suggestions on the table:

- A bring-your-own picnic/party for all the village and their visitors on the afternoon/evening of Saturday 4 June (this could be a street or garden party or something that could take place in the village hall).
- An evening firework display (venue to be confirmed).
- Commemorative planting as part of the Queen's Green Canopy, a tree planting initiative which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".
- A competitive scarecrow trail, based on figures or events covering the last 70 years.
- An exhibition of photographs: 70 years of Blythburgh.
- Decorations and bunting around the village.
- Provide souvenirs to be donated to under-16s in the village.

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