

BENHALL & STERNFIELD NEWS

September 2026

Your community needs you! Become a Parish Councillor! We have three (3) vacancies!

As a Parish Councillor representing YOUR community, you will help keep it a great place to live and work. You will be open to new ideas, have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude, be forward thinking, proactive, strategic, flexible, supportive, patient but tenacious, a team player, computer literate and willing to work electronically. Oh, and a sense of humour helps sometimes!! You will be actively involved in all the good things the Council does and your contribution will make a real difference. Your commitment will help to give our community a voice in local matters and represent residents' interests and needs. To find out more about this rewarding and essential role please visit our website, or contact our Clerk, Katherine at clerk.benhall@gmail.com, or come to our next meeting on 21 September, or talk to one of our existing Councillors. A simple application form (available from the Clerk) is required and the closing date will be **30 September**.

Walking Route to Friday Street

Several of us have tried this and it is now perfectly practical to walk to Friday Street. The traffic, especially HGVs, does thunder by so weekends are likely to be best. There is currently a protective barrier part of the way. The first part of this, going south, is footway (pedestrians only) and is quite overgrown. Highways won't currently close the road to clear it as that wouldn't be very popular with motorists after so many closures earlier in the year. The good news is that SZC have surfaced and diverted the footpath opposite the farm shop (which ultimately to Aldecar Lane). The path leads under a railway bridge which floods in the winter. While there are some pallets down to make it more usable we strongly recommend against using this until we have persuaded SCC Highways to repair it.

It's Entirely Batty!

Not everyone realises that our village is a home to a huge number of bats. A recent survey can be seen on the Parish Council website (Useful Info/Sternfield Bat Survey) which shows that we have 10 (ten!) different species including the rare Barbastelle (with its endearing pug face). Some nights there were literally thousands of sightings of Pipistrelles and Soprano Pipistrelles – quite something!

Plants on the Wadd

If it's plants you're after... then also go to the PC website (Useful Info/Plants on Wadd) and see the results of a survey in May which identified 80 different species of plant. This shows what a flourishing and important habitat we have right in the heart of our village!

Volunteers

The devastating fires at Dunwich are a harsh reality that this could happen to anyone at any time, so let's be prepared. If you have a useful skill that would be helpful in an emergency e.g. medically trained, electrician, chainsaw licence to name but a few. Time spent now could save time and lives later, email clerk.benhall@gmail.com or contact a member of the Parish Council to register.

Flower Show 8 August – the 80th Anniversary

The 80th edition of the Benhall & Sternfield Memorial Flower Show was a resounding success, bringing together residents from both villages and even holidaymakers for a memorable day of horticultural splendour and local festivities. Reverend Rob Leveritt led a thoughtful moment of remembrance for those lost in previous wars, and a poignant Last Post added real depth to the ceremony. The show was opened this year by Brenda Burtenshaw, a resident of Benhall, who was a child and lived in Sternfield during some of the earlier shows. The sun shone and a good time was had by all. Heartfelt thanks to the many, many hardworking volunteers who made the Show such a wonderful event. As well as the various long-serving and wonderful stalwarts of village life it was good to see new residents and visitors taking part. And the children in Forties fancy dress not only added to the commemorative flavour of the event but give us hope for continuity in the future!

Remember that the Show can only continue if we keep attracting more enthusiastic volunteers. Anybody willing to join our committee would be most welcome. Just leave your name at the Club!

Benhall & Sternfield What's On and Club News

Summary of recent survey regarding the Club

We received 82 responses to our questionnaire. An astonishing return for this kind of survey— thanks to all those who took part. It's great that 71 respondents were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the Club with the remaining 11 not commenting or neutral. There were, however, plenty of useful comments suggesting room for improvement! The Club Committee and Stewards have taken on board the feedback and, as far as resources allow, will work to improve the appearance and functionality of the Club. We will also be looking to expand the provision of food so watch this space! There was a wide range of suggestions as to social and community activities that might take place at the Club. Again, the committee will do what it can to meet requests, but it is important to remember that it is YOUR Club! So, if YOU want to run a club – yoga, pilates, stamp-collecting, wine-tasting or anything else - the Club will do what it can to accommodate you – including arranging access outside normal opening hours.

September events

Saturday 5 September, 8pm: Cat Squirrel! Brilliant local covers band

Saturday 12 September possible karaoke – watch Facebook for details

Saturday 26 September, 8pm Elvis Tribute Night with Andy Ottley back by popular demand

Wednesday 30 September Tune Up come and play or listen – pure magic

Wednesday 16 September and 25 November Thai Pop Ups are both full. But to go on the reserve list please speak to the steward at the Club or email helga_mark@btinternet.com, or call **07880 854415**.

Saturday 19 September - Ahoy me hearties! National Pirates Day! Benhall Village Club celebrates National Pirates Day starting at **2pm** with the **Benhall Village Treasure Hunt**. From **3pm**, the little pirates can enjoy a **bouncy castle and children's games**. There's a **Best Dressed Pirate Competition**. **Lily's Kitchen will be serving up a Pirate Foodie Fayre**, with tasty treats to keep the crew fuelled for the evening. From **7pm**, we'll have '**Pirates Bingo Tombola**!' And there's an extra treasure chest to keep an eye on — the Snowball rollover will be sitting at £200. More details soon on Facebook! Arrrrrrgh!

Save these dates for your diary

Saturday 17 October 7 pm– Poetry Evening Come along and read (or have someone read) your favourite poems. There'll be something for everyone – sad, spectacular, funny, romantic and even rude! A great way to meet new people!

Friday 23 October Benhall Club 7pm A Conversation about George Saunders led by Michael Peters & Graham Smith Please come along and share your recollections of George and meet some of his descendants. For those who didn't know George there'll be tales of battling Coypu, boot making and an insight into a bygone time.

Friday 20 November 2026 History Group's General Knowledge Quiz Benhall Club 7pm Back by popular demand!. Tables of 6 as usual, Watch this space for application details.

Benhall Village Club Celebrated Manette Baillie's 104th Birthday –

On Sunday 23rd August, more than 70 people came together to celebrate the 104th birthday of our village treasure, Manette Baillie. Guests enjoyed a wonderful homemade spread of freshly prepared sandwiches, delicious cakes and Helga's award-winning scones. The hall was beautifully decorated, and tables set out by Bex and Lily an absolute picture. And Manette even won a prize at her beloved Bingo. Funds were raised for charities: Breast Cancer UK and the Benhall Village Club. Many thanks to all those who attended, donated prizes, or contributed to making the celebration such a success.

How to contact the Club: call 01728 768140 at any time and leave a message For Club updates through the month: Club website: www.benhallclub.uk; OR Facebook www.facebook.com/benhallclub; Nextdoor: <https://nextdoor.co.uk/pages/benhall-and-sternfield-ex-servicemens-village-social-club-saxmundham-qb-eng/>

How to contact Benhall and Sternfield News: do tell us your news, thoughts and ideas. We can list your local event (Benhall & Sternfield) and report on it. Email ben-sternnews@gmail.com

For Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council: Noticeboards, www.benhallandsternfield-pc.gov.uk

Facebook: Benhall And Sternfield Community Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/900786860888023/>