

Norman Tower by Kim Whittingham  
<http://www.kimwhittingham.co.uk>

# CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

Established 2002

## NEWSLETTER

**No. 83**

**SPRING 2026**

<https://www.churchgateassoc.org.uk>

The Association promotes the interests of all residents, businesses, and property owners, not only in Churchgate Street, but also in the general area of all those streets that lead directly off it.

**Editor:** Jennifer Baker. For future articles and news, pictures, etc please send your copy by email to Jennifer, [newslettercaabse@gmail.com](mailto:newslettercaabse@gmail.com) **Autumn copy deadline is August 15<sup>th</sup>.**

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## Save the Date – CAA Spring Social

**Date for your Diary – Friday April 17th, 2026,  
7pm at the UMH Churchgate Street.**



We are delighted to invite you to a very special evening on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April.

Come along and join us for our CAA Spring Social. Enjoy a relaxed evening with wine and nibbles while catching up with friends and neighbours — or take the opportunity to make new acquaintances from across the grid.

Our guest speakers for the evening will be **Denise Fiennes**, who will lead a discussion with our CAA members **Jo Ellen** and **Fred Grzyb**, both of whom enjoyed distinguished careers in dance in New York, together with Jane Haworth, former Principal Ballerina with English National Ballet, and later Ballet Mistress and character artist.

### **“From Ballet to Broadway to Bury”**

**Jane Haworth** — dancer extraordinaire, character artist and Ballet Mistress with English National Ballet for 37 years — joins forces with Fred Grzyb, Emmy Award-winning costumier for numerous films, Broadway productions, and opera and ballet companies, to explore the world of ballet “front and back”: the performances audiences experience and the realities behind the scenes.

They will also discuss the profound impact on young people entering such a demanding profession at an early age.

Moderating the discussion will be psychotherapist Denise Fiennes, former Deputy Chair of English National Ballet, Founder Chair and current Trustee of STEPPS, alongside Jo Ellen Grzyb (yes, there will be nepotism!), who has worked in the performing arts on both sides of the Atlantic and is a Founder-Director of Impact Factory, a personal development training company.



STEPPS (<https://stepps.charity/>) is a UK charity providing specialist mental health support to the dance community — from students to professional dancers, teachers, companies, and freelancers.



In a profession where training often begins at a very young age, STEPPS delivers mental health education, early-intervention workshops, and access to therapists with lived experience of dance. Their aim is to reduce crisis, prevent dropout, and protect both the wellbeing and careers of dancers across the UK.

This talk is being given in memory of Matz Skoog — premier dancer, artistic director, and passionate advocate for dancers’ mental health.

There will be an opportunity to donate to this very worthy charity on the night.

We very much look forward to seeing you on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April.

## Membership Reminder: Memberships Outstanding

Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership — we truly appreciate your continued support.

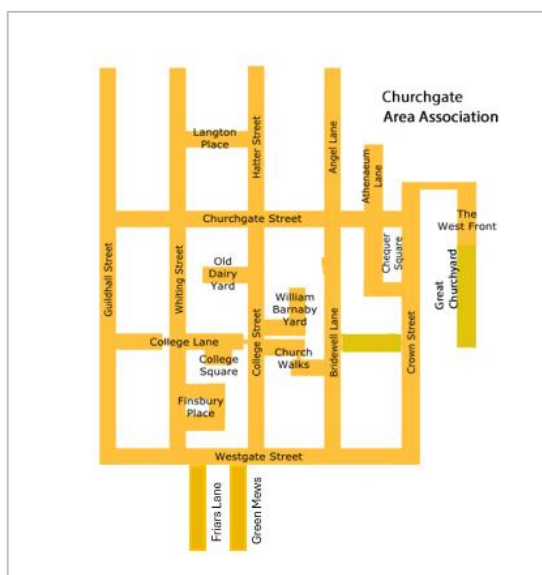
If you've yet to renew, annual membership is just £5 per person and includes entry to our popular April social evening and the October AGM, both with engaging speakers and free refreshments.

We still have a number of outstanding membership renewals. If you have not yet renewed, we would be grateful if you could do so at your earliest convenience.

We will shortly be contacting you to confirm whether you wish to remain a member of the CAA. If you would like to renew in the meantime, please let us know.

*The more members we have, the stronger our voice when representing residents and businesses on local issues.*

**If you're not already a member, we'd be delighted to welcome you.** Anyone living in, owning, or renting property in the streets shown on the map below is eligible to join. Please see next page for details of how to join.



*Spring across the Grid*

**How to Renew or Join** To help reduce administration, we would be very grateful if you could pay your annual membership by **Standing Order**. You can set this up directly by instructing your bank, either online or in branch:

***Set up a Standing Order with your bank:***

*Please pay the account of Churchgate Area Association held with Barclays Bank, sort code 20-16-12, account number 50100951 the sum of: £\_\_\_ (minimum £5 per member).*

Date of first payment: on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

and thereafter, the same sum **annually on 1<sup>st</sup> of October** until further notice.

Please put as reference your name, house number and street.

Alternatively you can pay by cash or cheque (payable to Churchgate Area Association) to the Membership Secretary, Sue Worsfold 52 College Street IP33 1NL or email Sue at [membership@caa-bse.org.uk](mailto:membership@caa-bse.org.uk) Please put as reference your name, house number and street.

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## Keeping us Updated

We would greatly appreciate it if you could let us know of any changes to your contact details — for example, a new email address, a change of home address, or, in more difficult circumstances, the loss of a loved one.

Please email Sue at [membership@caa-bse.org.uk](mailto:membership@caa-bse.org.uk) so we can keep our records up to date.

If you are not on email, please don't worry — we will continue to keep you informed of general news and other communications by delivering information through your door.

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## Greene King Developments

There is no further news to share on the Greene King redevelopment at present. However, as mentioned previously, Greene King intends to share its masterplan with the community in 2026. This will provide an opportunity to gather feedback on the proposals and demonstrate how earlier input has been incorporated before submission to West Suffolk Council.

Following this engagement, a Masterplan Framework Report will be prepared and submitted to the Council.

The project website will be updated in due course with details of public consultation events: <https://www.greenekingconsultation.co.uk/>

Our GK subcommittee (Colin Pedrick, Simon Baker, David Mills and Paget Fulcher) continues to work behind the scenes with the council and other organisations involved or with a particular interest in the proposals.

For any queries regarding the redevelopment, you can contact the GK team directly at [contact@greenekingconsultation.co.uk](mailto:contact@greenekingconsultation.co.uk).

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## Tech Support at Bury St Edmunds Library



Are you struggling with technology?

One-to-one support sessions are available at Bury St Edmunds Library, tailored to your individual needs — whether that's learning how to use your smartphone or tablet, getting online, or downloading apps.

 Every Thursday

 10:00am – 11:00am

Booking is essential. These sessions are free, but available by appointment only. Please speak to a member of library staff or call 01284 338830 to book your session.

Help is available for phones, tablets and PCs. Bring your own device along, or you can use one of the library's computers.

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## Rats and Pest Control – Resident Information



A resident has asked that we highlight concerns about rats and general pest control (including pigeons, vermin, mice, cockroaches, wasps, hornets and fleas). There is particular concern that risks could increase when the Council's new Recycling and Food Waste collections begin in June 2026.

Please note that West Suffolk Council does **not** provide pest control services. Property owners are responsible for keeping their land and buildings free from vermin. If you experience an infestation, you should contact a professional pest control specialist for advice and treatment.

If you are concerned about pests or vermin at a neighbouring property, you should notify the Council. They can investigate the source of the problem and take any necessary action.

 West Suffolk Council: 01284 763233

Or complete their online form, **selecting Environment Service**. [West Suffolk Council enquiry form - Service - West Suffolk Councils Electronic Forms](#)

If the concern is in a West Suffolk Council owned **park or open space**, please email [parks@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:parks@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

The [British Pest Control Association \(BPCA\)](#) provides information about various types of pests as well as giving details of local pest control services.

The [British Bee Keepers Association - swarm page](#) has information on swarm removal.

The [National Pest Technicians Association \(NPTA\)](#) is a professional trade association that represents all sectors within the public health and pest control industry. They can advise and deal with any pest control problem, whether large or small.

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## Places of Introspection by resident Robin Barratt

**From Bedfordshire to the Medieval Grid – A Japanese Garden Story** When people learn that Mary and I moved from a small Bedfordshire village to the ‘Medieval Grid’, they often ask, “Don’t you miss the countryside?”

Not really — Bury has plenty of green spaces. What I do miss, however, is the Japanese garden we left behind.

**A Garden to Fall in Love With** When I met Mary 25 years ago, her home already had a long-established Japanese garden, created in the late 1970s as a designer’s show garden. It included a tea house, a large koi pond, beautifully placed stones and carefully chosen planting. I immediately fell in love with it — and with Japan.



Designed as a traditional ‘stroll garden’, it offered changing views along winding paths and a wonderful sense of calm discovery. The gated entrance to the garden, purportedly built low so visitors must bow their heads in respect as they enter the garden, moving from the outside world to a serene, sacred place, with large stepping-stones across the granite gravel.



We were fortunate to have a beautiful outlook from the lounge window across the koi pond to the wisteria, trained to drape across the water. Very relaxing.

**Discovering The Japanese Garden Society** In 2004, we joined The Japanese Garden Society (JGS), a national charity that introduced us to Japanese-influenced gardens across the UK. We were amazed at how many exist — and how generously members open their own gardens to visitors. A particular highlight is the outstanding private garden at Cottered in Hertfordshire — truly worth a visit if you ever have the opportunity.



**A Visit to Japan** in 2017, JGS gave us the unforgettable opportunity to visit Japan itself. We experienced grand stroll gardens, intimate tea gardens, ‘shakkei’ (borrowed landscape) gardens and minimalist Zen gravel gardens.



We travelled in autumn, when the maples were ablaze with colour — celebrated in Japan just as enthusiastically as the spring cherry blossom.

If this has sparked your interest, you can learn more about The Japanese Garden Society at [www.jgs.org.uk](http://www.jgs.org.uk).

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## **Proud of our Town - Why Tourists Are So Important to Our Town Centre & Our Businesses** by resident Mark Cordell and CEO of Bury BID

Occasionally I hear voices bemoaning the number of tourists visiting our town. I understand the sentiment — but tourism is an integral part of our successful town centre economy.

Bury St Edmunds continues to buck the national trend of “doom and gloom” surrounding struggling High Streets. I am often asked why. There are many reasons, but one of the most significant is the steady flow of visitors choosing to spend their time — and money — here.

Despite rising operational costs for businesses of all sizes, our town centre remains resilient. Footfall levels are stable and the retail vacancy rate is around 5%, compared with a national average that exceeded 15% last year. That is no small achievement.

Our businesses depend on a healthy mix of loyal local customers and new visitors. Tourists, in particular, arrive with the intention of enjoying the town — exploring, dining, shopping and experiencing what we have to offer. While they are here, they are spending in person, not online.

People choose Bury St Edmunds for many reasons: our rich history, cultural and entertainment offer, reputation as the Foodie Capital of Suffolk, wealth of high-quality independent businesses, and even our status as one of the most dog-friendly towns in the UK.

The Our Bury St Edmunds Business Improvement District (BID) plays a crucial role in promoting the town, particularly to audiences in London, the South East and the Midlands, through its tourism brand, *Bury St Edmunds and Beyond*. Competing for the tourism pound is no easy task — we cannot afford to hide our light under a bushel. We must confidently showcase what makes our town special.

The results speak for themselves. An independent report shows that income generated by tourists during 2023 and 2024 increased by £4.6 million. The total value of tourism to the local economy in 2024 is estimated at £55.9 million — a substantial boost for our town centre businesses. Growth has been seen in overnight stays, total nights spent and day visits alike, outperforming many nearby locations.



This success is no accident. It reflects targeted marketing, strong partnerships and confidence in the authenticity and quality of what Bury St Edmunds offers. The BID's efforts were recently recognised nationally when Bury St Edmunds and Beyond won **Best Heritage Destination Guide 2025** in the Best Getaways Awards.

Without tourists, many of our businesses simply would not survive — and local residents would not be able to enjoy the vibrant retail, hospitality and leisure offer that makes our town centre such a special place.

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### **The Story Behind Bellota** by CAA members Linda and Ruben Keenan

Bellota was born from conviction — and timing. It began with Ruben's ambition to create a restaurant of his own, and my unwavering belief that his cooking was exceptional and capable of building a devoted following.



*Recent visit by 'Suffolk Royalty'*

From the outset, I knew Bellota would be built around an open kitchen. That decision was both practical and philosophical. Many guests are fascinated by the choreography of a professional kitchen — the precision, focus and intensity behind each dish. Just as importantly, the format reflects my management philosophy: transparency, equality and shared purpose. No one

hidden behind a wall, no hierarchy on display — simply a unified team, visible and valued in equal measure.

Working this way is motivating for chefs too. They see, in real time, the expressions and reactions their food evokes. That immediacy sharpens standards and deepens pride in their craft.

When we began searching for a home, location was critical. Bury St Edmunds immediately stood out. It is recognised as a destination for serious food lovers yet retains the warmth and loyalty of a strong local community. That balance between committed residents and visiting guests felt exactly right.

When the property on Churchgate Street became available, it felt perfect. What we could not have anticipated was just how supportive Bury would prove to be. The encouragement and practical help from Bury in Development, Bury & Beyond, the Churchgate Area Association and our fellow businesses on Churchgate Street have exceeded every expectation. There is a genuine spirit of collaboration here, and that early support gave us a meaningful foundation.

Bellota is, in many ways, the product of belief — belief in food, in transparency, in teamwork, and in the power of the right community at the right time.

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## **Parking & Permit Bay Update – The Grid** by [Paget Fulcher](#), Committee member



As of this update, new road markings for the permit bay and bay extensions have been completed on Westgate Street. Markings on Whiting Street, College Street and Churchgate Street are still pending. By the time you read this, however, we hope to be able to celebrate tangible progress after nearly nine years of lobbying the County Council.

Although we will not see as many new spaces as were initially indicated during the County Council's consultation on the draft order — largely due to objections concerning Friars Lane and the proposed extension of restriction hours (from 8am to 8pm across the permit area), which slowed implementation — meaningful progress has nonetheless been made.

You may also have noticed that four electric vehicle charging bays were introduced in Chequer Square in December. To accommodate charging cables, an additional gap was left between the bays, resulting in the loss of two parking spaces. We raised concerns that these EV bays might be restricted solely to vehicles actively charging; the County Council has assured us this will not be the case.

During this period, a second round of consultation on the redevelopment of the Greene King site took place. We used this opportunity to engage with the project's Transportation Consultant and to reinforce the issues that matter most to residents of the Grid.

I estimate that the current works should increase permit bay capacity by 14 vehicles. However, with the loss of two spaces in Chequer Square due to the EV installations, the net gain will be

12 spaces. Had Friars Lane been included, it could have provided parking for up to 16 additional vehicles, meaning we are receiving less than half of what was originally sought.

I am considering pursuing further spaces that were previously requested but declined by the County on what I believe were questionable grounds. If we are to have any realistic prospect of success, the matter may need to be escalated to a higher level within the County.

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**Planning Reform – What It Means for Bury St Edmunds** by CAA member Richard Summers, (Cofounder and former Coordinator of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership - Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute following an international career in spatial planning and economic development in the public and private sectors)

The Government is reforming national planning policy to prioritise economic growth and housing delivery. The Planning and Infrastructure Act (December 2025) reintroduces strategic planning through new Spatial Development Strategies and changes planning fees to strengthen local authority resources. **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was also revised in 2025, with further consultation running into early 2026. The changes aim to simplify policy, speed up housebuilding, reinforce sustainable development and strengthen the plan-led system.

These national reforms are already affecting local policy. No sooner had West Suffolk Council adopted its Local Plan than it began a review to reflect updated national guidance. The current Plan proposes less housing growth around Bury St Edmunds than earlier drafts, based on revised population forecasts, with development focused mainly on urban extensions and employment sites.

The Plan also designates eight Local Green Spaces within Bury St Edmunds, strengthens protection for the Leg of Mutton land, safeguards key views into and out of the town centre, and supports the potential preparation of a Master Plan for the Abbey of St Edmund area.

**Two significant projects near Churchgate will be shaped by this evolving framework. The regeneration of the Greene King brewery site offers opportunities for housing and economic growth, alongside heritage and traffic considerations. The Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project proposes a new visitor centre, conservation works and improved links, potentially boosting tourism and community engagement while raising similar planning questions.**

How these national and local policies align will determine how such major applications are assessed in the years ahead.

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*Springtime*

## YOUR COMMITTEE 2025-26

<b>Chairman</b>	Jennifer Baker, 40 Crown Street <a href="mailto:chairmancaabse@gmail.com">chairmancaabse@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Cathy Friel, 42 Crown Street
<b>Treasurer</b>	David Flowerday, The Manor House, Honey Hill
<b>Membership</b>	Sue Worsfold, 52 College Street <a href="mailto:membership@caa-bse.org.uk">membership@caa-bse.org.uk</a>
<b>Committee Members</b>	Brian Jones, Paget Fulcher, Nick Law, Geoffrey House
<b>Newsletter</b>	Jennifer Baker, 40 Crown Street, <a href="mailto:newslettercaabse@gmail.com">newslettercaabse@gmail.com</a> If you would like an article or news item in the Autumn issue, please email Jennifer with your copy by August 15 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>General Enquiries</b>	<a href="mailto:info@caa-bse.org.uk">info@caa-bse.org.uk</a>

## Other useful Contacts

<b>Police</b>	PC Timothy Bond	<a href="mailto:timothy.bond@suffolk.police.uk">timothy.bond@suffolk.police.uk</a>
	Timothy is the beat officer for the medieval grid area, and his role is to engage with the public, listen to them and try to resolve the issues that they face. He says, "we cannot solve everything, but we may be able to make things better". He has a little more time than the response officers for the town so if he can help and support us with any issues that our members of the grid face then please do let him know.	
<b>West Suffolk Council</b> Anything to do with Abbeygate Ward	Cllr Julia Wakelam	<a href="mailto:Julia.wakelam@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Julia.wakelam@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Bury St Edmunds Town Council</b>	Mayor Donna Higgins	<a href="mailto:donna.higgins@burystedmunds-tc.gov.uk">donna.higgins@burystedmunds-tc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Suffolk County Council</b> Anything to do with 'Tower Ward' (i.e. the grid)	Councillors Martin Robinson and/or David Nettleton	<a href="mailto:martin.robinson@suffolk.gov.uk">martin.robinson@suffolk.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:david.nettleton@suffolk.gov.uk">david.nettleton@suffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Suffolk County Council</b>	To Report Potholes and Pavement problems	<b>Potholes:</b> <a href="https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/potholes/report-a-pothole">https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/potholes/report-a-pothole</a>  <b>Pavements:</b> <a href="https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/resurfacing-roads-and-pavements/pavement-resurfacing/report-a-pavement-defect">https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/resurfacing-roads-and-pavements/pavement-resurfacing/report-a-pavement-defect</a>

## ORDER YOUR BASKETS TO HELP BURY ST. EDMUNDS LOOK ITS FLORAL BEST

FULLY MAINTAINED BASKETS: £102.50 EACH

- ✿ We will provide ready planted colourful displays in water conserving containers installed for you on the outside of your building at the beginning of June.
- ✿ Baskets watered, fed and maintained all summer until the season has ended\*.
- ✿ Baskets removed and all plants recycled at the end of the season.
- ✿ You need to provide and fix brackets strong enough to hold a max weight of 19kg (42lbs). To ensure the bowser can reach the baskets, the brackets on the front of your building must be positioned so that the base of the baskets are no higher than 3.5m (12ft) from the ground.
- ✿ Baskets are hung on own brackets at property owners risk.

Please fill and return the order form plus payment by 17th April 2026.

**Cheque:** Make payable to 'Bury in Bloom' & post to: Bury in Bloom Treasurer, 90 Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3AA.

**BACS:** Email your order and confirmation of BACS payment date to treasurer@burysociety.com. Bank details: Barclays Bank, Account name: The Bury St Edmunds Society CIO Bury in Bloom, Sort Code: 20-83-69, Account No: 60822396.  
\*Subject to Watering Route



## Hanging Baskets

### Order by April 17th

#### Fully Maintained Hanging Baskets

**For Businesses and Householders. Bury in Bloom own their own hanging baskets.**

- Ready-planted, colourful displays in water-conserving containers, installed for you on the outside of your building at the end of May.
- The basket will be watered, fed and maintained all summer until the season has finished (subject to watering route)
- The basket will be removed and all the plants recycled at the end of the season.
- <https://www.buryinbloom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Basket-Order-Form-Electronic.pdf>

## ORDER FORM 2026

I would like to order the following number of hanging baskets:

..... Fully maintained baskets @ £102.50 each Total £.....

Price includes delivery, watering, maintenance, collection & recycling at the end of the season.

Please order by 17th April 2026

### PAYMENT

- I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to Bury in Bloom.
- I have paid £..... by BACS on..... (Confirmation date).

### DETAILS

Name.....

Business/Home Address.....

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..... Postcode.....

Address where basket/s to be installed (if different from address above)

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..... Postcode.....

.....

Telephone.....

Email.....

Signed..... Date.....