

CLAYDON AND WHITTON RURAL END OF YEAR REPORT 2025

January 2025

The last day of the old year and first day of the new year were marked by wet and windy weather. There were hardly fireworks for a few days.

The Gipping School of Dance started a new adult ballet class at the Village Hall. A Murder Mystery Evening was held at Hill View Business Park. Barclay Music Makers performed their panto "Beauty and the Beast" at the Village Hall. The music makers are a long established group and their shows are very popular.

February 2025

The A14 between the Claydon and Needham Market junctions was closed for 10 weekday nights from 8pm until 6am, to allow for hedge cutting at the sides. Traffic was diverted along Norwich Road and Ipswich Road through Barham and Claydon. Not good for residents living along the road and not good for the road surface either.

For various reasons, the team of coordinators for the voluntary distribution of the In Touch monthly magazines decided to give up this service. They have done a marvellous job for over 10 years and will be missed. The publishers used to give an annual grant to the coordinators which was shared among local organisations. The publishers advised they would be taking over the distribution and advertised for paid deliverers.

March 2025

County Councillor Chris Chambers announced that changes would be made to the waste and recycling collections in Suffolk. There will be an extra bin for some of the recycling and a food caddy, with the collection of general waste reducing to once every three weeks. Some residents will find this difficult to cope with, I suspect!

The village hall continued to host "Gong Baths" or "Sound Baths" on Friday evenings, which are calming and relaxing (I'm told). The organisers also offer woodland evenings in the warmer months.

CCTV was installed at the Claydon Recreation Ground, covering the car park and pathways, but not any of the play equipment. There is sometimes anti-social behaviour there, including vehicles driving onto the grassed areas. It would be a good idea to have some sort of fencing which would hopefully deter some of the unwelcome activities there.

A drunk driver crashed into the bus shelter near The Crown pub, reducing it to a heap of rubble. The police were called and the footpath was closed. This proved dangerous for pedestrians and bus users as traffic is very fast at that point.

The Strong Beans cafe in the Community Centre closed down. There were all sorts of rumours and allegations flying around on Facebook, but there are always two sides to every story. The business transferred to a new location at a farm shop near Debenham (The Hog and Hen, Mill Green).

At the end of the month the In Touch magazine was delivered to me, so obviously new (paid) deliverers were found. Whether they will cover the whole area that was previously covered by the volunteers is another question – it is a large area, with some properties on the edges of Claydon, Barham and Whitton Rural really only accessible by car.

April 2025

The collapsed bus shelter had still not been cleared away and the barriers were still there for pedestrian safety. Possibly there was some debate going on as to who should pay for the clearance and replacement work?

The Community Centre advertised on Facebook for a new occupier to take over the empty cafe area. The applicant/s would need to fully equip the area. Hoping for someone to come along, as the previous cafe was very popular.

The fence along the footpath between Station Road and Coopers Way was replaced, having been taken down in error some time ago.

May 2025

Lisa Wylie crocheted another marvellous postbox topper outside the One Stop in Claydon, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Early on this month, to the great amazement of many people, there was a power cut in the Claydon and Barham area, and possibly all the IP6 postcodes. It happened at about 9.45 pm, but only lasted a couple of minutes, thank goodness!

There was a VE Day party at the Community Centre, which I understand went well.

In mid May we learned that our local MP, Patrick Spencer had been charged with two counts of sexual assault. Mr Spencer became a Conservative MP for the first time in the 2024 General Election, but was suspended from the Party and had the whip withdrawn. He then became an independent MP.

Work began on clearing the demolished bus shelter close to The Crown pub. Most of the rubble was cleared in one day. No news of when the new shelter will be built (if at all).

Towards the end of the month there was news on Facebook that the Claydon Cosy Cup Cafe would be opening on Saturday 19th July in the Community Centre. They will serve breakfasts, lunches, cakes and pastries from 8 until 2, Tuesday to Saturday.

June 2025

There was a road traffic collision involving a Simonds bus and a car, at the junction of Sandy Lane and The Crescent in Barham. Two people were taken to hospital with minor injuries. The police, fire and ambulance services attended.

The Claydon and Barham Church Fete took place on Saturday 7th June, mostly indoors due to the very wet and windy weather (yellow weather warnings!) Nevertheless, £1622 was raised.

Kinetic Adventure on the Hill View Business Park in Claydon closed down. This was a "Science Centre" for families which I believe was quite popular.

The Norwich Road Coop Store was scheduled to undergo renovation works and external scaffolding was being set up.

An advert was placed on Facebook, looking for an operator to run a new cafe in Claydon, on the Hill View Business Park. Not too far from the Community Centre and the new Cosy Cup Cafe there. Hopefully both will do well.

July 2025

The Coop finally stuck a notice on their doors to announce their closure from 9pm on Saturday 5th July until Thursday 25th. Quite a long time to be without the store, so residents had to find other shops to use.

The Churches Conservation Trust and the Volunteers of St Peter's in Claydon, were working to repair a window which was vandalised in 2024 and was boarded up. They were appealing for £2,200 to carry out this work at the redundant church.

The annual concert at Barham Hall, in aid of St Mary's, Barham, was held as usual in the grounds of Barham Hall. This is always a popular evening out for many local residents and visitors from further afield. Luckily it was a dry evening after a pleasant and not too hot day

Budgens at Great Blakenham also closed for 8 weeks from 4pm on Thursday 10th July. This added to the pressure on Claydon One Stop, Bramford Coop, and Needham Market Coop. Not easy for residents without their own transport.

The Co-op reopened in its new corporate style, which seemed to be everything in black! A new layout, which took a lot of getting used to, plus an extra self-service till, and a lot more takeaway food and drink.

The Cosy Cup Cafe opened at the Community Centre and got off to a good start, with a good menu.

August 2025

The bells at Barham Church were rung at 6.30pm for the 80th anniversary of VJ Day.

A quiet month for local news, probably due to holidays! And the IN Touch deliveries around the parishes seemed to be thin at best.

September 2025

On the day the schools reopened today the weather was rather damp.

Traffic problems returned with the school reopenings, but these are a common problem due to the narrow main road which runs through Claydon and Barham, along with parked vehicles. Hard to believe this used to be the main Ipswich to Norwich Road. Nowadays there is heavier traffic, by volume and weight, compounded by regular holes being dug in roads and pavements for repairs and upgrades to different services. With the building of new housing in the parishes, the traffic volumes will only get worse.

More nighttime works took place on the A14 for three weeks. Again, the traffic was diverted through Claydon and Barham.

The Greyhound pub was forced to close due to a power cut, which affected part of Claydon village. It was not too long, and this is thankfully a rare occurrence in this area.

Our MP, Patrick Spencer, held a surgery this evening at Barham Church Hall, by appointment. I did not pick up any feedback about this. He is good at keeping in touch via Facebook, leaflets and e-mails.

October 2025

There were two days given to an exhibition at Barham Church Hall, regarding the proposed extension to Barham Quarry, which would affect traffic volumes through Claydon and Barham. This could be controversial. There is already much local opposition to the setting up of an extra quarry in the village of Witnessham.

Lisa Wylie, the lady who has crocheted many lovely post box and bollard toppers for the village, had to put things on hold, as the post box outside the One Stop shop and Post Office in Claydon was out of action, awaiting adaptation into a solar powered box, where parcels can be dropped off/posted without needing to use the Post Office counter. So probably no more post box toppers, but we all hoped Lisa would be able to continue brightening up the village by decorating the metal bollards across the road, outside The Greyhound pub, and the concrete ones outside The Crown pub. We also hoped this new box would not mean the Post Office counter would no longer be needed inside the shop.

November 2025

Little in the way of village news for the last month or so. The post box was still out of action and the staff inside the shop had no idea when it would be ready for use. Another triumph for the Post Office! All mail and parcels had to be dealt with at the counter inside the shop.

The bus shelter at the stop near The Crown pub was still awaiting replacement. No sign at all of anything happening there either. You have to wonder why everything takes so long to be sorted out? A sign of the times? Or, dare I say it, the state of the country?

Opus Park, the new business centre on the Old Ipswich Road, opened and is signed on the roundabout at Junction 52 on the A14. There are commercial units there, not too large, but I am not sure exactly who is occupying them.

The new development at Barham Meadows continued to grow, and more road closures in Barham Church Lane were planned for December, for facilities to be installed on this development and also the Ely road development. Traffic was diverted through the village, as per usual, causing headaches for residents and deliverers alike. Once the building work really gets going on the Ely Road site, the problems with traffic can only get much worse. It seems that nobody in the County Council has really considered the traffic impact of these two new developments, particularly once the road is diverted through Barham Meadows and Church Lane is blocked off at the Norwich Road end.

December 2025

The new solar powered letter box finally got going outside the Post Office. We are still without a new bus shelter – 9 months on!

The Christmas Experience at Barham Church on 6th December raised £2050 for the two charities EACH (local) and UNICEF (global).

Members of the Black Shuck Motor Cycle Club assembled in the Greyhound car park to begin their annual charity ride to distribute presents to children.

Lisa created some more lovely crochet designs for the bollards outside the two pubs, The Greyhound and The Crown.

Pupils from Claydon High School donated food items for parcels to be delivered to FIND in Ipswich. Well done all.

The Greyhound and Community Centre held New Year's Eve events.

The end of the year was a relatively quiet evening as far as I could tell – not too many loud fireworks! Let's hope for a peaceful 2026 and all good things for Claydon, Barham and Whitton Rural parishes.