



## Christmas Celebrations 2025

All our services and celebrations over the Christmas period were special and here is a selection of photos to prove it ...



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Our carol service – candlelit and with refreshments to share afterwards – had contributions from various people, readings, music and a special one from Eddie Bradbrook who played 'Jingle Bells' on the piano.

A collection was made for Christian Aid for the Christmas appeal. If you have a late donation to make, please contact Paulette Reed.

## Dickens by Candlelight

We welcomed Bob Allen back to the Meeting House on 6<sup>th</sup> December to read from Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' and from other festive delights. This event was organised by the Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House and raised £285.06, which will support the fabric of the building. Thank you again, Bob.



Lighting the first advent candle of the year –



## Christmas Day



Thanks to Maggie Hodges for preparing the advent wreath as ever.

We had visitors from New Zealand and Switzerland too –



We have a photo album and a gallery of photos of what happens in the Meeting House on our website ... if you have taken photos at any time throughout the year, please send them to Maggie Hodges (for the photo album) and to Adam Whybray (for the website).

## **Celebrating the life of Bruce Chilton**

The service of celebration for Bruce's life will take place on Wednesday 21st January, 2pm at The Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BN. All welcome to refreshments afterwards at a nearby wine bar.

No parking at The Octagon but close by is Colegate Car Park, Golden Dog Lane, Norwich NR3 1HS ...

## **Services in January**

4<sup>th</sup> - Paulette Reed, Ipswich Unitarians.  
11<sup>th</sup> - Deborah Bennett, Chairperson of The Shelley Centre, RDA. (our charity for 2026)  
18<sup>th</sup> - John Quill  
25<sup>th</sup> - Linda King, Ipswich Unitarians.  
Membership service and congregational lunch.

## **Birthdays in January**

We wish everyone who celebrates their birthday in January a wonderful day and a great year ahead ... especially Paulette Reed on 14<sup>th</sup>; Riena Jackson on 26<sup>th</sup>; Juliette Spence on 27<sup>th</sup>; Mark Hawes on 29<sup>th</sup> and Alessandro Taylor on 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Events in 2026**

Please note the dates for the following –  
**Trustees meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January** – if anyone has a question or concern, please let one of the trustees know ahead of this meeting.

### **Planning meetings with Nick Butler Watts via Zoom on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

From 7pm to 9pm. These meetings are open to all who are interested in the future of the Meeting House. We intend to discuss all options and ideas – so anyone with a contribution is welcome to join us. Please ask Tessa for details and the link ([tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk)).

### **Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House AGM – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 7pm.**

**The Riverside Jazz Trio** – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March  
7pm to 9pm – more details soon, so save the date.

## **Ipswich Unitarians' Charity: 2025-26.**

**The Shelley Centre for Therapeutic Riding, Shelley, Nr Ipswich, Suffolk.**

**Charity Number 1113636. Website:**

[www.shelleyrda.com](http://www.shelleyrda.com)

At the Annual General Meeting of the congregation, we chose to support *The Shelley Centre* in the coming year. Two of our members have a link with this charity, as one has a granddaughter and another a great nephew who have both benefitted from what is on offer.

At present their waiting list is closed as they do not have the resources to cope with the therapeutic needs from within the community.

*The Shelley Centre* is a member of the UK-wide *Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)*. On the Charity Commission's website, here's how they describe their work: "[as] an independent charity we provide riding for the health & wellbeing for children and adults with physical and learning disabilities. We not only teach riding skills but use the horse for therapy through exercise. We work five days a week during term time with approx. 130 riders a year and 90 volunteers "

Initially helping children from *Belstead Special School* starting in 1979, the *Shelley Centre* became an independent local charity in 1999 called *The Hadleigh RDA Group*. In 2001 the name was changed to *The Shelley Centre*.

The volunteers work hard to raise the £90,000 per annum to keep the centre running. Costs are for maintenance, equipment, horse feed, tack & new horses etc. Throughout the year they hold a variety of different events including a stall at the Hadleigh Show, a bingo evening and quiz night.

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026 Debs Bennett, Chairperson of *Shelley Centre* will be taking part in the service to inform us of the work they undertake.

Photo is of Alexander, Linda King's great nephew, on 'Ebony' the mechanical horse.



Please pass all suggestions and ideas for fundraising for the Shelley Centre to Liz Constable.

## Auckland Unitarians



In November, Tessa and David Forsdike visited the Unitarians in Auckland, New Zealand.

They arranged their trip to include a Sunday in Auckland so that they could visit the only Unitarian church in New Zealand – though we understand there is also a Unitarian community in Hamilton. On that day the church members were having a sale of work after the service to raise funds for their charity, which gave us a chance to chat and to buy some presents too.



## Flag by John Agard

This poem was part of the service led by Andrew Bennett earlier this autumn and is certainly worth repeating ...

*What's that fluttering in the breeze?  
It's just a piece of cloth  
that brings a nation to its knees.  
What's that unfurling from a pole?  
It's just a piece of cloth  
That makes the guts of men grow bold.  
What's that rising over the tent?  
It's just a piece of cloth  
that dares the coward to relent.  
What's that flying across a field?  
It's just a piece of cloth  
that will outlive the blood you bleed.  
How can I possess such a cloth?  
Just ask for a flag my friend.  
Then blind your conscience to the end.*

## Trustees' Dedication

Paulette Reed and Tessa Forsdike, with their hearts in their mouths, climbed the scaffolding to see the work which had been carried out on the shop fronts and on the roof of the Hall. Here is a photo of Paulette with Mark from A C Harding who did the work for us.



Old buildings need a lot of attention! The chimney is now safe.

## Lost, strayed or on an unknown bookshelf ...

Many months ago, I lent the book '*Femina*' by Janina Ramirez to someone in the congregation - I think! Unfortunately, I cannot recall who to!

If anyone has it, please return to Linda. Thank you.



Our ever-loyal organist Robert Waller playing at the carol service.

## Thought for the month

And suddenly you know: it's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings.  
*Meister Eckhart*

## Disclaimer

We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community.

## Contacts

Contributions PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa Forsdike before the deadline of Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January, ideally by email to [tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk)  
To contact our Secretary, ring 07980 641620 (or email [tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk)) or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.