



Spring is coming ...



Contents

1 – Spring is coming; Terrorist poem
2 – History in the Meeting House; Heart & Soul;
Christmas Bits and Bobs stall; ISCRE visit and AGM
3 – ISCRE AGM cont.; Ipswich Umbrella
4 – Membership Service and Lunch; Welcome to
Kenneth; Services; Events (incl. Jazz Trio)
5 – History of refugees in Suffolk; Eric Walker is
101; Birthdays; GA AGM;
6 – Photos; ITFC Wellbeing Walks; Ipswich Bid for
City of Culture 2029; Thought for the Month; Contacts

IF THEY CALL ME A DOMESTIC TERRORIST

If they gun me down
in my own street someday
may my crime be compassion.

May the record show
from every angle
that I was helping a woman up
after they pushed her to the ground.
that not even their weapons
could stop me from extending
my hand to those in need,
that I was a walking example
of the best my elders taught me -
that everyone is equal
and worthy of defending.

If they tell the nation,
from the highest podium,
that I was a domestic terrorist,
let it be known that my radical act
was believing the best in people
when they wanted nothing more
than to divide us.

Michael F Dubois
@michaelfdubois

Shared on Facebook following the shooting by ICE
agents in Minnesota

History in the Meeting House

Looking for one thing but found something else!
Behind the clock I found this bit of history
written on a piece of board. "Restored and
Converted from Vertical to Anchor Escapement.
By F Chalk 1891.



Discovered and submitted by Paulette Reed.

Heart and Soul

I'm delighted to invite you back to Heart and Soul, on its new day and time - the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm.

The link and user ID will be the same as usual:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85223630611>

ID 852 2363 0611

Please remember if you'd like you can bring either a candle or a sacred/meaningful object with you. Very warmest wishes and I'm looking forward to seeing you when you can join us.

Lizzie Kingston Harrison
Congregational Connections Lead for the GA

Christmas Bits and Bobs Stall

Thank you to all who contributed by donating and 'buying' goods from our annual charity fundraising Christmas Stall. £50.00 was raised for Shelley RDA. A Happy and peaceful New Year to you all,
Love from the Recycling Fairies x

Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE)

On a cold, wet, Friday evening in December Linda King and I set out to join in sharing a festive meal with people from affiliated organisations to celebrate the end of year and the work done locally by ISCRE. We were greeted by Phauelle Mutumbari (Business & Operations Director). Also there, were Hamil Clarke, MBE, (Chair); Liz Pettman, (Vice Chair), Sharon Lee (Operations Manager), and Daisy Weekes - in total 15 people. We were treated to a variety of delicious dishes of Indian cuisine. Conversation flowed despite the television being on with no-one watching! As is always the case with events such as this, there was more than enough food and those who wished for a second (or third) helping got some to take home too.

We have been supporters of ISCRE in various ways, and through all the name changes since its formation in 1977.

Paulette Reed

ISCRE AGM

"I feel that if we don't take seriously the ways racism is embedded in structures of institutions, if we assume that there must be an identifiable racist who is the perpetrator, then we won't ever succeed in eradicating racism" Angela Davis, scholar-activist, teacher and writer.

When I attended the AGM of the *Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE)* on January 28th, the words of Angela Davis came to mind again and again. *ISCRE's* work to fight discrimination against minoritised groups and individuals, and to educate people about the unconscious biases that perpetuate discrimination, is very solidly anchored in their partnerships with institutions: primarily prisons, the police, workplaces, and schools. As the reports on activities during 2025 demonstrated, it is through these invaluable partnerships that a small organisation can make huge positive changes and stay sustainable.

ISCRE AGM cont.

The Chair of the AGM opened with the comment that, given the intensified political and economic pressures on minoritised communities, 2025 had been a “mixed year.” And the future horizon is troubling. To what extent will negative political forces gain momentum and lead to a situation where those in power feel that organisations like *ISCRE* should not exist? At the same time, evidence from each of *ISCRE*’s ongoing projects in 2025 demonstrated their effectiveness in fostering change despite communities’ reporting increasingly toxic environments in schools, workplaces, and residential areas.

In 2025, *ISCRE* continued their work in five prisons, including HMP Highpoint and HMP Chelmsford, providing training on Diversity and Inclusion for prisoners, and on Unconscious Bias for staff members. As the presenter commented, since prisons tend to recruit their staff from a local pool, invariably the ethnic make-up of the prisoners and the staff are quite different. At HMP Highpoint, in the Newmarket area, 50% of the prisoners are from ethnic minorities, and this is quite different to the ethnic make-up of staff. As a result, from the prisoners’ perspective, *ISCRE*’s presence as an independent body in the prison offers them an invaluable support when they face discrimination from staff. In turn, this leads prisoners to feel confident enough to participate more fully in activities, a development that promotes their rehabilitation. At the same time, however, the overpopulation and underfunding of prisons means that staff tend to end up focused primarily on basic safety and security concerns, and so this can impede *ISCRE*’s work.

ISCRE’s work with local police through their *Suffolk Police Powers Public Scrutiny (SPPPS)* programme has continued to change the culture within local police forces during 2025. It was particularly impressive to hear that some of *ISCRE*’s own training resources (e.g., videos) on use of police power fairly in Stop and Search are now integrated into the police’s own training. As

the government is now planning to organise police forces into larger entities, some questions will emerge about *ISCRE*’s role in the future.

2025 at *ISCRE* has seen the first year of the *Beyond Boundaries* programme funded for two years by *Sizewell C* to support young people aged 15 – 21 from disadvantaged backgrounds to prepare them for apprenticeships, Further Education, or employment. *ISCRE* has worked with 20 young people, offering weekly employability sessions, enrichment trips, volunteering opportunities to build their CV, personal mentors and application support, a total of 694 hours of engagement with the group. The evidence of positive change was compelling, and *ISCRE* will be hosting a celebration of the young people’s progress in June/July 2026. Overall, each report at the meeting testified to the vibrancy and significance of *ISCRE*’s presence supporting marginalised and minoritised groups across key institutions where insidious, or overt, discrimination and racism continue.

Liz Constable

Ipswich Umbrella Is Opening!



Thursday 12 Feb 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Climate Cafe	Saturday 14 Feb 2026 12:00pm - 4:00pm Craftivists	Thursday 19 Feb 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Climate Cafe
Saturday 21 Feb 2026 10:00am - 12:00pm Repair Hub with Suffolk Repair Shed	Sunday 22 Feb 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Board Games Club	Monday 23 Feb 2026 6:00pm - 8:00pm Craftivists
Thursday 26 Feb 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Climate Cafe	Sunday 1 Mar 2026 1:30pm - 2:30pm Book Club	Thursday 5 Mar 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Climate Cafe
Saturday 7 Mar 2026 6:00pm - 8:00pm Film Night	Sunday 8 Mar 2026 1:00pm - 2:00pm Board Games Club	Tuesday 10 Mar 2026 7:00pm - 9:00pm Social

Dates are not final, please check our live calendar linked below!



RSVP and Follow Us: <https://linktr.ee/ipswichumbrella>

Membership Service and Lunch



On Sunday 25th January we held our Membership service when we renew our commitment and promise to the Meeting House congregation and this year, we also welcomed a new member, Kenneth Watson, who has joined our services regularly via Zoom from his home near Reading. It was lovely to see him in person for the first time as he had a new camera on his computer.

We also enjoyed the biscuits he sent us. Some of us stayed afterwards for a shared 'potluck' lunch – see the photos above. There is always plenty of food at these events and especially desserts for those of us with a sweet tooth!

Welcome to Kenneth!



This photo was taken on the zoom screen.

Services in February

1st - Ray Seal, Ipswich Unitarian, Zooming from France

8th - Lynne Davies, Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich

15th - John Quill

22nd - Rev Cliff Reed, Minister Emeritus, Ipswich Unitarians. Followed by communion

All services start at 10.45 and are linked via Zoom. To request the link each week, please email Robert on bob.waller2255@gmail.com

Events

JAZZ
SATURDAY
21ST MARCH
7PM - 9PM

£12 ON THE DOOR
£10 MEMBERS/CONCESSIONS
FOR INFORMATION & TICKET
RESERVATIONS:
email iuhfriends@gmail.com

THE RIVERSIDE TRIO

JOHN PARKER - GUITAR
JOHNNY HERBERT - SAX
BEN WATSON - BASS

UNITARIAN MEETING HOUSE
FRIARS ST
IPSWICH
IP1 1TD

REFRESHMENTS
AVAILABLE

SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF THE IPSWICH UNITARIAN MEETING HOUSE

Pop this Jazz Trio concert in your diary – 21st March at 7pm - not one to miss! See also the events in the Ipswich Umbrella – page 3.

The Trustees' next meeting is on 26th February – do let one of the trustees know if you have any questions or suggestions, especially for fundraising for our charity, the Shelley Centre.

A History of Refugees in Suffolk

12 February 2026 | 5.30–8.00pm

Location: Waterfront Building, Ipswich, IP4 1QJ

Speaker: Martin Simmonds, Fundraising and Communications Manager at Suffolk Refugee Support

Introduction: Sir Nick Young, Patron of Suffolk Refugee Support and former CEO of the British Red Cross and Macmillan Cancer Support

From the custodians of our most famous buildings to Bond girls and footballers, via forgotten small-boat arrivals, we look at the surprising and sometimes overlooked story of refugees coming to Suffolk across the centuries, their lasting contribution to the county, and the historical context for Suffolk Refugee Support's work today.

Doors will open at 5.30pm for a 6.00pm start. There will be refreshments available afterwards.

Eric Walker is 101 years old!

Our friend from the Quaker Meeting House, Eric Walker is celebrating his 101st birthday on 6th February - congratulations Eric! He has issued an open invitation to his friends to join him on Saturday 7th February at the Quaker Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich, from 11 am to 1pm. Please let him know if you will be joining him - ericwalker@gn.apc.org

(other) Birthdays in February

Happy birthday wishes to Robert Waller on 2nd; Ali Mercer on 3rd; Matilda Forsdike, Kit Dickinson and Rachel Hamilton on 5th; Gryphon Bradbrook on 9th; Tracy Sakals on 11th; Linda King on 14th; Beryl Beech on 16th; Ralph Spence on 19th and Tessa Forsdike on 20th.

GA AGM

Tickets are now on sale for the General Assembly Annual Meetings (27–29 March 2026, Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire).

This will be a weekend of spiritual connection, prayer and learning from others, as well as the formal business of the AGM. We're particularly keen to reach people who haven't attended before, and those exploring leadership within the movement, as well as harnessing the collective wisdom of people who know more about the movement's radical history.

You'll reconnect with friends, meet people from congregations you've never visited, hear stories that will inspire you, and be part of something bigger than your own community.

This year's keynote speaker is [Sarah Corbett](#), an award-winning activist, Ashoka Fellow, author and founder of the global Craftivist Collective. We're also offering a full programme of workshops and talks designed to feed your spiritual life and give you ideas to take back to your congregation.



<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/whats-happening/annualmeetings/>

Our Ipswich meeting is seeking a member to represent us at the AGM and to vote on our behalf. If you are available and interested, do speak to one of the trustees.



The members of the U3A Photographic Group visited our Meeting House recently and took some beautiful photos – some of which they have shared with us. I intend to publish one each month. Here is the first one.

ITFC Wellbeing walks

There will be some new Wellbeing Walks taking place around Portman Road, delivered by the Ipswich Town Foundation in partnership with Feel Good Suffolk and Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Suffolk. These free, friendly sessions offer adults a chance to get some gentle exercise, meet others and enjoy a relaxed walk-and-talk in the local area. The walks will take place on **Wednesday 4 February** and **Wednesday 4 March, 1pm–2pm**, meeting at the **Sir Bobby Robson statue at Portman Road**. They are open to anyone aged 18 and over, and we simply ask that participants wear suitable footwear for walking.

Ipswich Bid for City of Culture 2029

Ipswich is currently putting a bid forward to become City of Culture 2029, led by our MP Jack Abbott. If we win the bid, Ipswich and its residents will benefit greatly. We urge you to fill in the survey as an individual or as a member of our congregation, to support and get behind the town bid. **The deadline for this stage is 8th Feb.** Please do fill in the form. It will only take a minute of your time. We have already responded on behalf of the Meeting House. Thank you.

More info and a link to the survey -

www.ipswich2029.com



Room for another U3A photo

Thought for the month

Don't be afraid to go where you've never gone and do what you've never done, because both are necessary to have what you've never had and be who you've never been. - *Mike Dooley*

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 25th February, ideally by email to

tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

To contact our Secretary, ring 07980 641620 (or email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk) or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.