



Solar Panels ...!!



Permission has been granted for us to install solar panels on the roof of the Meeting House, and we hope the work will start soon so that we can benefit from the cheaper electricity from the autumn and through the winter. This will mean a warmer space, protection for the fabric of the building and a more welcoming atmosphere for people attending our events. Quite something for a Grade 1 listed building ...!

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Goodbye to the old piano –



Our old grand piano has served us well, though it has become tired and we were advised it was not worth repairing, so we invested in a new one – supported by funds from the legacy of Miranda McIntosh, whose husband Thomas was a concert pianist. We think she would be pleased. The replacement is an upright with a depth of tone and which will give us a little more space in between the box pews. Hello to the new one –



GenZ and Refugees

Suffolk Refugee Support's Summer newsletter brought heartening news of the many ways the charity's work has provided the advice, resources, fellowship, and sense of community to aid the resettlement of asylum seekers in Suffolk. And probably one of the most remarkable examples of their advocacy comes in Nasser Hamid's trajectory. Nasser arrived in the UK at 16 from the Sudan, with no English. But with SRS's support in conjunction with *Ipswich Town Football Club Foundation's* Youth Programmes, Nasser has successfully passed his GCSE in English and qualified as a FA referee. He has also been refereeing this August at the Edinburgh International Cup. And from here, he's been working with the *Beyond Boundaries* programme for youth, a partnership with Sizewell C, on the path to training as an engineer. Go Nasser!

However, as *SRS's* newsletter reminds us, the uplifting experiences of individual asylum seekers in Suffolk unfold against a backdrop of disheartening and foreboding changes at the national level for asylum seekers in the UK. Earlier this year, Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood announced that refugee status would become temporary, subject to assessment and renewal every 30 months. In the case of a refugee's home country being deemed safe, they will be expected to return home. This is a policy adopted by the Home Office following the model of Denmark where making refugee status temporary reduced asylum claims by 90%; here in the UK, this change ends the previous policy that provided 5 years of protection, followed by permanent settlement. Inevitably, this change introduces further precariousness into the lives of refugees in the UK alongside the Home Office's suspension of the *Refugee Family Reunion* programme for a year, with no information about future plans.

These changes come on top of the Home Office's reduction in 2025 of the so-called "move-on" period from 56 to 28 days: the time allowed for refugees granted asylum to find themselves housing before being evicted from asylum accommodation. As Imran Hussain, Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs at the *Refugee Council*, writes in a letter to *The Guardian* on August 24th this year, Andy Burnham's pledge to end rough sleeping is admirable, but "*Until the Home Office stops pushing refugees on to the streets, ending rough sleeping will be out of reach.*"

Our media focuses on those arriving on small boats, and yet, as the *SRS* newsletter points out, much less media focus is directed to the Home Office's withdrawal of safe and legal routes for asylum seekers. Not only has the *Refugee Family Reunion* option been withdrawn; the *Afghan Resettlement Programme* has also been closed to new applicants.

Are there signs of light and positive change in the situation for asylum seekers in the UK? In March of this year, the Home Office announced that "*Britain will open new, safe and legal routes with community sponsorship (employers, faith organisations, community groups and universities) becoming the new norm.*" And we're witnessing a very positive generational divide and change in attitudes towards refugees in the UK. On June 20, 2026, World Refugee Day, Ipsos carried out a survey: in response to the statement, "*Refugees make a positive contribution to my country,*" 63% of GenZ agreed, while only 36% of Baby Boomers agreed. Let's hope GenZ act constructively on their beliefs to implement policies that open up safe, legal routes! And as *SRS* suggests, we can all write to our local MP to advocate for the introduction of more safe, effective and legal routes for asylum seekers: you can find templates via the Safe Passage website (<https://www.safepassage.org.uk/campaign>).
By Liz Constable

Upcoming Events for your Diary

We have a busy time coming with lots of events to tempt you into the Meeting House –

Open Stage Ipswich

A new, welcoming drama group, exploring creativity, confidence, connection and meaning through gentle, theatre-based workshops. You do not need to be an actor. You only need curiosity and a willingness to take part.

What happens in a session?

In the company of experienced facilitators, we will use theatre techniques alongside reflective and meditative practices to explore what matters to us, and how we communicate it. Sessions may include simple theatre games, storytelling, movement, voice work, working with short texts, and creating together in a supportive group.

We will explore:

- Place and belonging
- Community
- Storytelling and text
- Authentic communication
- Creative confidence

With Ross McCrory, theatre practitioner and teacher, and Lizzie Kingston-Harrison, Unitarian minister-in-training.

All sessions are completely free.

Try a taster session:

Tuesday 8 September, 7-8pm

Tuesday 15 September, 10-11am

Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House, Friars Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TD.

Workshops will then take place twice a month in October and November 2026 and January 2027. Precise timings to be arranged.

Please contact Ross (rossmccrory1@gmail.com /07958297958) to ask a question or book a place. Otherwise, do just come along to a taster session and see what it's like!

Ipswich Town Art Trail

Following the success of last year's launch of the town's Art Trail we are repeating it – with even more artists. Over the weekend of 12th and 13th September there will be displays and demonstrations of various media both in the Meeting House and outside in the marquee as well as at other venues throughout the town.



Heritage Open Days

On the same weekend, the Meeting House will be welcoming people interested in the heritage and history of the building and displaying some of our old records and interesting papers.

Ride and Stride

On Saturday 12th September walkers and cyclists will be travelling round Suffolk, visiting churches, chapels and meeting houses with sponsorship to raise funds for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. We will be open too to welcome them and to sign their sponsorship forms

Life's Rich Tapestry

An illustrated talk by Liz Chester about her work as a tapestry weaver and why we need one. This is part of the Heritage Open Days Week, and the event is free to all. Do join us on Tuesday 15th September at 7pm to learn more.



Boot scrapers – another free illustrated talk on architectural oddities by architect Stuart Edgar - Thursday 17th September at 7pm.

friends of IPSWICH present

ARCHITECTURAL ODDITIES



On the Fifth Day

Jane Hirshfield (2017) later published this poem in her 2020 collection, *Ledger*. It was read on the National Mall in Washington, DC, as part of the March for Science on Earth Day, April 22nd, 2017. Jane Hirshfield wrote it on January 25th, the fifth day of Donald Trump's presidency, when information on climate change was removed from the White House website and scientists at the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [National Park Service](#), [department of agriculture](#) and other federal agencies were ordered to release no further research information without permission. Scientists at [Badlands National Park](#), in South Dakota, began unofficially tweeting factual information that day, and scientists at many governmental agencies and universities began copying research files on to back-up servers.

On the fifth day
the scientists who studied the rivers
were forbidden to speak
or to study the rivers.
The scientists who studied the air
were told not to speak of the air,
and the ones who worked for the farmers
were silenced,
and the ones who worked for the bees.
Someone, from deep in the Badlands,
began posting facts.
The facts were told not to speak
and were taken away.
The facts, surprised to be taken, were silent.
Now it was only the rivers
that spoke of the rivers,
and only the wind that spoke of its bees,
while the unpausing factual buds of the fruit trees
continued to move toward their fruit.
The silence spoke loudly of silence,
and the rivers kept speaking,
of rivers, of boulders and air.
In gravity, tongueless,
the untested rivers kept speaking.
Bus drivers, shelf stockers,
code writers, machinists, accountants,
lab techs, cellists kept speaking.
They spoke, the fifth day,
of silence.

Seeds of Hope & Action (SoHA)

Exhibition - an inspiring exhibition that invites you to explore the power we each have to create positive change. This takes place from 22nd September to 4th October at Dance East on the waterfront – free admission.

Created by Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and Earth Charter International, this engaging 25-panel exhibition is designed for people of all ages. It explores how our everyday choices can help address climate change, protect the natural world, and build a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

Through powerful stories, creative displays, and practical ideas for action, the exhibition encourages visitors to discover their own potential to make a positive difference in their communities and for the planet.

Whether you're just beginning your sustainability journey or already taking action, we hope you'll leave feeling inspired, empowered, and full of hope.

3rd October 2026 at 6pm - a screening of [The People's Emergency Briefing](#) film at the Unitarian Meeting House in Ipswich on 3rd October 2026 at 6pm. Free entry.

This is a 50 minute documentary film on climate and nature challenges presented by Chris Packham. Followed by discussion

[Register Here](#)

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/ipswichumbrellaclimatehub/2356099>

Also –

Saturday 10th October – Ian Griffiths reading extracts from Dylan Thomas.

AND

By popular demand, **Jorge Jimenez and Joy Smith** will be coming back to the Meeting House in October – see the next page for details -

A WEEKEND WITH BACH

Friday 16 October 7pm

Bach I — From Solitude to Dance

The G-minor Sonata, B-minor Partita and D-minor Partita

Saturday 17 October 8pm

Baroque After Dark (18+)

Stories, music and scandal from the 17th Century

with Joy Smith

Sunday 18 October 1pm – lunchtime concert

Bach II — Architecture and Light

The A-minor and C-major Sonatas and E-major Partita

Prices -

Friday — Bach I £15

Saturday — *Bach After Dark* £15

Sunday — Bach II £15

Weekend Pass — all three £35

Services in September – all at 10.45

6th - Linda King, Ipswich Unitarians. (Circle service)

13th - Robert Waller, Ipswich Unitarians.

20th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in Training, Ipswich.

27th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison. Minister in Training. Harvest Festival & Lunch.

NB on 27th the Ipswich half marathon will be taking place, and some roads will be closed to traffic early in the morning.

Harvest Festival & Congregational Lunch.

Decorating the Meeting House for the Harvest Festival will take place at 10am (ish!) on Saturday 26th September.

Please bring items of tins of food, packets of dried goods, e.g. rice/pasta and a few special treats for children, as our gift to Ipswich Women's Aid.

The Congregational Lunch will follow the Harvest Service; please bring food items to share at our table not only amongst us but also any visitors who may be joining us.

Unitarians in East Anglia.

Thank you to all who attended this very successful 'Gathering of Unitarians in East Anglia' held in the Ipswich Meeting House on the 12 July.

£77 was received in donations for Shelley Centre Riding for the Disabled, the Ipswich Unitarians charity for 2026.

Next year's 'Gathering of Unitarians in East Anglia' will be at 3pm, 11th July 2027 at the Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich. Please put the date in your 2027 diaries and look out for further information nearer the time.

City of Culture 2029

On 10 August, Ipswich submitted its bid to become UK City of Culture 2029. It went in on time, in full, and with a story to tell that no other place could tell and its distinctiveness is entirely down to everyone who contributed.

This bid has been shaped by hundreds of people across Ipswich and Suffolk. Community organisers and residents' groups. Schools, colleges and the university. Artists, freelancers and cultural organisations.

Businesses who backed it before there was anything to see. Young people who told us, plainly, what they thought. Colleagues who read drafts at midnight and partners who signed up to something they could only take on trust. Every one of those conversations is somewhere in the document.

Whatever the outcome, the work does not stop here. The bid aims to reconnect what has been disconnected. And just through the relationships built through this process, and the ten-year Culture and Heritage Strategy that work has begun, and we mustn't lose that momentum. That was always the point.

Amy Vaughan

Bid Director. On behalf of the Ipswich 2029 bid team

Birthdays in September

We wish everyone celebrating their birthday this month a happy day, especially Karen Poulter on 7th; Thomas Shaw on 8th; Freddie Gray on 14th and Ann Baeppler on 20th.

Book Group

Our next meeting is on Thursday 1st October at 7pm when we will be discussing '*Instructions for a Heatwave*' by Maggie O'Farrell. Though set in 1976, this is timely for this year's heatwave too!

Litter picking

'Litter-ally Ipswich' aims to improve local people's awareness of services already offered by Ipswich Borough Council to keep our streets tidy. This includes the free hire of litter picking equipment, and multiple online reporting tools for fly tipping and littering. We are working to increase publicity for a council-run-scheme, where residents can borrow [litter picking equipment](#) free of charge. Ipswich residents can report any street cleaning concerns directly to the Council [here](#).

The statistics are alarming - 318 tonnes of litter was collected from the streets of Ipswich in the 2022/23 year. Whilst those found guilty of littering can be punished with a fine of up to £2,500, this is still not a big enough deterrent for some people. A Keep Britain Tidy report stated that 49% of people admit having littered in their local area.

Thought for the month

Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men. – Martin Luther King (1963)

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 Friday 25th September ideally by email to tessa@tessajordan.co.uk.

To contact our Secretary, ring 07980 641620, email ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.