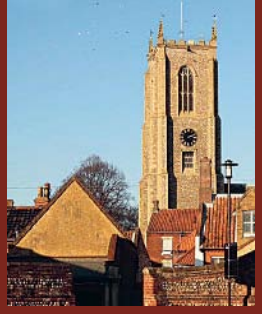
FAKENHAM PARISH CHURCH

A ROCHA SILVER AWARD WINNER 2024 ECO CHURCH



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December 2026

THE BEACON

Church and Community Magazine



* Reflection * Christmas services * Community Archive
Old Fakenhamian visits Paradise * Let's meet
* Fairs and concerts * Support your local traders

Church Contact Details

www.fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk

Rector
Revd Tracy Jessop
The Rectory, 21 Gladstone Road
Fakenham NR21 9BZ 01328 862268
Email: rector@fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk
Or: admin@fakenhamparishchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister:
Elaine Burbidge 01328 851848 – Fakenham

Church Wardens
Gail Allcock 07769 811554 – Fakenham
Andrew Lee 01328 878870 – Fulmodeston

Parish Safeguarding Officer:
Anne Peppitt 07947 722255 – Fakenham
Email: anne.peppitt23@gmail.com
Gill Lee 01328 878870 – Fulmodeston
Email: gillandrewlee@btinternet.com

Beacon Deadline
Editorial content to Audrey Sharp by 1st of every month
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Bundles available for deliverers on the last Thursday of every month

Beacon Content
Audrey Sharp
aes22@btinternet.com

Advertising
Dee Jackson
deejackson@btinternet.com

Beacon Distribution
Alison Harding
fakenhambeacon@gmail.com

Parish Prayers

6 Dec Bridge Street, Cattlemarket Street, Hempton Road. *Voluntary organisations.*

13 Dec Greenway Lane, Greenway Close, Buckenham Close, Baxter Close. *Missionaries.*

20 Dec North Drive, Thorpeland Road, Lee Warner Avenue, Whitelands. *Residential care homes. Carers, professional and voluntary.*

27 Dec Lancaster Avenue, Cranmer Court. *All who find Christmas difficult.*

From the Parish Registers

Funerals

30 Oct 26 Elizabeth Sadler *(Fulmodeston)*

Baptisms

15 Nov 26 Luka Wright

Cover image:
The Revd Tracy Jessop

"If you're looking for a quiet family Christmas, for goodness' sake don't play Monopoly!"



Rector's Reflection



Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this, Christmas Day itself seems a little way off. We still have Advent to journey through; a time of preparation that helps us discover the deeper meaning of the season. Around town, the shop windows and lights will soon brighten the darker afternoons, while the familiar bustle of the market and high street will remind us that Christmas is drawing near. In church, we will hear the Nativity story once more at our carol services and share the joy of the Crib Service with friends from across the town and surrounding villages.



Looking ahead to all of this, a few familiar words about Christmas came to mind:

"Christmas isn't just a day. It's a frame of mind." (Miracle on 34th Street)

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all year long." (A Christmas Carol)

"Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day." (Helen Steiner Rice)

In other words, 25 December is not simply a day to celebrate and then forget until another year comes round. Christmas holds a meaning that can and should make a difference as we enter the new year and beyond. Its message matters just as much when the lights have come down and the decorations have been put away.

On 25 December, we celebrate the birth of a baby who changed the world and continues to transform lives and hearts. We celebrate the coming of the eternal Light into this often-darkened world through a man whose life and example, death and resurrection continue to lighten our path and show us God's Way. We celebrate the coming of God into this world of messiness and grime, which happened because we needed to be shown how much God loves each one of us.

Christmas is an exciting time for children and a time for family and friends to gather. Yet we also remember those who may be spending it alone, missing someone they love or worrying about making ends meet. A friendly word, an invitation or a helping hand can make the love we celebrate feel real. So, enjoy the preparations and the day itself but carry that kindness into the months that follow. If we look beyond the worldly trappings and focus on the reality of the incarnation – God coming to be with us – we can discover true joy, hope, peace and love, and share them with our neighbours throughout the coming year.

May you have a blessed celebration when it comes.

The Revd Tracy Jessop





Churches around Fakenham welcome *you* in December

Parish Church **Upper Market Place, Fakenham NR21 9DY**



Sun 6	10am Parish Holy Communion
Sun 13	8am Holy Communion BCP (said) 10am All Age Worship
Mon 14	6.30pm A Quiet Christmas
Sun 20	10am Parish Communion 6.30pm Carol Service
Thurs 24	4pm Crib and Christingle Service 11pm Midnight Mass
Fri 25	9.30am Family Christmas Communion
Sun 29	10am Parish Communion (said service)

Other Services Thursdays on 3, 10 and 17 - 9.30am Market Day Holy Communion a short, quiet service. No service on Thurs 24 or 31 Dec.

9.45am every Monday (except Bank Holidays) Stepping Stones for pre-school children with a grown-up. (Including free children's clothes Swap Shop)

Salvation Army **Oak Street, Fakenham.**
Every Sunday morning at 10.30 am

Methodist Church **Chapel Lane, Sculthorpe. NR21 9QB**
Morning service of worship 11am each Sunday

Fakenham Baptist Community Church
Every Sunday 10:30am Fakenham Community Centre in Oak St.
Sun 20th December: Carol service.
Christmas Day: 10:00 at the Fakenham Community Centre. All are welcome.

St Anthony RC Church **Wells Road, Fakenham.**
Sunday Vigil Mass every Saturday at 6.00pm
Sunday Mass at 10.45am and Tues-Fri at 10.00am

Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration, Scarborough Road, Gt Walsingham
Every Sunday morning 10.00am Hours 10.30am Liturgy.
For Christmass - 24th Dec: Vigil at 5.00pm. 25th Dec: Liturgy at 9.30am

Holy Trinity, Hempton
Sunday Mass at 9.30am. Wednesday Mass at 9.30am.

We continue to pray for peace for all the people of Gaza, Israel, Iran and throughout the Middle East at this time.
We continue to pray for peace for the people of Ukraine and all areas of conflict.
"God of peace and justice, we pray for the laying down of weapons in every place of war.
We pray for all those who fear tomorrow, that you would hold and protect them".

Christmas Concert

At The Salvation Army, Oak Steet, Fakenham

Fakenham Fellowship Band

Friday 11th December 2026, 7.30pm

No charge, but donations if desired will support The Salvation Army's work locally

Fakenham Temple Salvation Army Church & Community Centre
16 Oak Street,Fakenham, NR21 9DY. 01328 864 526

Registered Charity No. 214779 and in Scotland SC009359

Fakenham Choral Society

will perform John Rutter's

'When Icicles Hang'

and Bob Chilcott's

'Christmas Night'

at its

Christmas Concert

Saturday 12th December at 5.30 pm
in **Fakenham Parish Church.**

The concert will also include carols from the choir and some for audience participation.

Tickets are £10, with **under 18s free**
(but do require tickets) and will be available at www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org/forthcoming-1

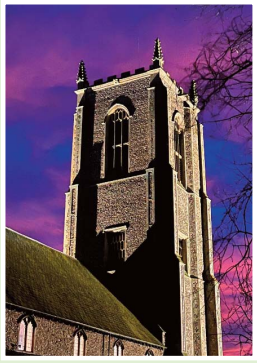
Floodlighting Sponsorship - helping our light shine

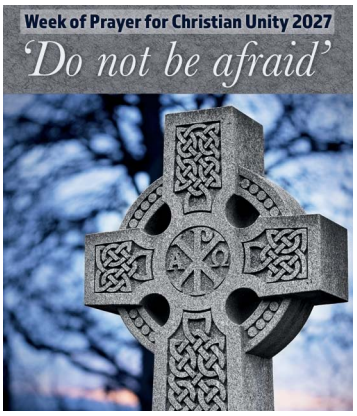
3 Dec – For Kenneth, on our 40th Wedding anniversary. Forever loved, *Janet Moyes.*

19 Dec – Remembering Babs, a special Mum.
Love Louise x

You can keep our Church beautifully lit by sponsoring one of our floodlights for £15 a week, perhaps to celebrate a special occasion or to remember a loved one.
If you are a taxpayer, you can gift-aid your contribution.
You can also donate anonymously.

If you would like to sponsor our floodlighting, please use the form available from church or on our website or call us on 01328 862268 for more information.





Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2027 Fakenham

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity takes place each year from 18th – 25th January.

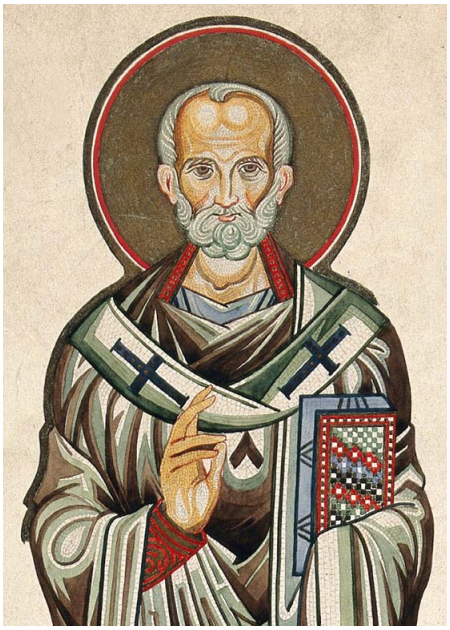
It is an international ecumenical celebration when individuals are invited to pray for Christian unity.

Churches and Ecumenical organisations celebrate the week through a variety of different services and worship in different styles and ways.

Please come and join us
as we celebrate this week in Fakenham.

Times and venues will be in the January Beacon.

Let's meet … St Nicholas



I was fortunate to meet with the renowned Saint Nicholas, to talk about himself, his history, and his thoughts on having been the person behind the immortal Santa Claus.

St. Nicholas of Myra was born on 15th March 270 AD and died 6th December 343. He was the son of a distinguished wealthy Christian family of Greek origin from Patara (in modern day Anatolia in Turkey).

His parents sadly died young in an epidemic. He was cared for by his uncle, the city's bishop, and was educated to a high standard. He was known for many attributes, amongst them piety, competence and knowledge and entered the church early. He used the money from his parents to help the neediest people in society, the poor, the sick and disadvantaged.

He became known as Nicholas the Wonderworker. As his good deeds became more widely known, it was said that he caused miracles amongst those he helped. There are numerous accounts of his personal care and daring deeds to alleviate suffering. Some of the most colourful are concerned with rescuing three young women from a life of prostitution, saving three innocent soldiers from execution, and calming a storm at sea whilst on a voyage.

There is a pictorial record of the first of these three, which shows Saint Nicholas giving the father three bags of gold, so his three daughters could have a dowry and avoid a life of slavery.

What can you recall from childhood? I have one or two happy memories of life at home, but the sadness of losing both parents was awful.

What did you learn from them? Courage and generosity of spirit.

How might you describe yourself as a young man? My life, I hope, was guided by seeing other's lives in all their starkness and poverty. I had a rich inheritance and felt I should use the money to directly benefit others.

Did you always act anonymously? That was always my intention. But it wasn't just about giving money, I spent time with people, engaged with them and listened. That for some was the most precious gift.

Was that why you were associated with present giving? I think it must have been. There were lots of stories about my work, and I kept no record of those I helped, but news spreads.

And were your religious roots the basis of your philanthropy? As a Christian, absolutely. Issues today have not changed. The bereaved, the sick, the poor and the war-torn all appreciate being heard and helped. However, my greatest and first duty was to promote the life of Jesus Christ and spread his word.

Perhaps your giving was one example of Christianity? In a way, yes. But it is the inner life and light which shines through and brings hope to others.

Was the story about your helping save three women, true? This is the most well-known story of my helping. It is certainly true to my life's pattern of helping others. I did request that the father did not make this publicly known but he was overwhelmed with gratitude.

How aware was the church of what you did? I'll answer that in a different way. We were part of the Roman Empire and the role of the Emperor was perhaps more significant.

How, exactly? I was out of favour with one Emperor, Diocletian, and he imprisoned me for my faith, along with so many Christians. I was beaten, tortured but refused to be broken. Some suffered appalling deaths.

How long did that period last? It was seemingly endless. It was between 303 and 311AD.

Religious persecution must have been dreadful. It was, and still exists today.

Moving on, are you shocked by the money spent on children at Christmas nowadays? I think more telling are the numbers who cannot do the same thing and how they can enjoy the festivities without vast expense. It saddens me to see some families incur debt because of consumerism.

So, St Nicholas became Santa Claus and the rest is history? I am happy enough with its evolution, as giving and receiving are part of the symmetry of life. And certainly, a part of Christianity.

What do you see of modern-day Christmas, that you'd like to be a part of? Christmas day dinner with all the trimmings. I have an idea that I'd be very partial to mince pies!

Kay Hathway

(Image: Wikimedia Commons)


FAKENHAM
PARISH CHURCH
Christmas Tree Festival
A celebration of faith, community and Christmas
Opening times
Food and refreshments
Other information
26 November – 3 December 2026
Mon – Sat 10am – 8pm
Sun 12 noon – 8pm
Refreshments served daily from 10am to 7pm (from noon on Sunday)
Explore 46 imaginative Christmas trees
Write a prayer to fill our prayer trees
Christmas Market, Tombola & Grand Draw
FREE ENTRY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FAKENHAM AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

In this season of happiness and celebration, when searching through the late barber Austin Gill's huge donation of photographs and scrapbooks (that are now on a dedicated page on the Archive website) we came across a photograph that seems appropriate for this time of year.

Built in 1848 the building, that was originally the National School for Girls and Infants later became a church hall and then a whole community hall that was used for many other things. Here we can see what was probably Fakenham's original pop group, the Electrons, playing one of their skiffle numbers in the 1960s.

If you'd like to see many more photos like this as well as watch some slide shows or browse through lots of local people's scrapbooks, just come to one of our meetings in church, from 2pm to 4pm on the last Tuesday of every month, or look on our site at www.fakenhamcommunityarchive.weebly.com

Howard Young



Is someone's drinking affecting your life?

If so, you are not alone.

Al-Anon has no affiliation with any religion, political entity or organisation.

Contact Help line

0800 0086 811

if you have any questions or need advice.

Domestic abuse – If you need help…

If you, your family or friends are experiencing this here are some phone numbers which may be of help:

If you are in immediate danger, always call 999.

Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) provides joined up services for those experiencing violence or abuse regardless of where you live in Norfolk.

Phone: 0300 561 0555.
Text number: 07860 063464

The story of a hymn – Joy to the world

Having always thought this hymn was American in origin, I was surprised that the lyrics were written by a 17th century Englishman, who came from a family of strict non-conformists. Isaac Watts, a prolific hymn writer, the son of a schoolteacher, was born in 1674. A precocious and gifted child, he wrote competent verse at the age of 7 and excelled at Latin and Greek. His father had spent some time in prison, over his religious dissent and staunch non-conformist views. So, living in a 'rebellious' household, it is not surprising that Isaac attended the Dissenting Academy at Stoke Newington under the Rev. Thomas Rowe. He had rejected Oxford or Cambridge due to their perceived restrictive religious views.

In 1698 he was the assistant minister of the Berry Street Independent church and four years later, became a pastor, in spite of suffering poor health. In 1712 he accepted an invitation to visit Sir Thomas Abney in Stoke Newington, and by Sir Thomas' insistence, it became his permanent home. It was much better for his health, but he never resigned from ministry, preaching when he was able.

The lyrics of Joy to the World are usually thought to be about the Nativity and the theory certainly fits this hymn. However, Watts was writing about the second coming, basing it upon Psalm 98, with reference to Genesis chapter 3 in the third verse. The melody, 'Antioch', was adapted by American composer Lowell Mason, from a tune from Handel's Messiah.

Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love.



Kay Hathway

Sources: Discipleship Ministries; Wikipedia and Hymnary.Org; AI

Christ Church, Fulmodeston

You are all invited to our Christmas Craft Fair in the church and in the Old School Hall on Saturday 5th, where you can top-up your Christmas shopping with something special. Browse the glorious range of artefacts crafted by our gifted local crafters, check the Home Baking stall, where among other treats you'll be able to snap up some festive cakes and preserves, or some of James's Sausage Rolls – the stuff of legend – and enjoy the friendly calm and bright atmosphere, with entertainment assured by local musicians The Unthank Irregulars, specialising in traditional tunes collected in Norfolk, led by fiddle and dulcimer: you'll recognise some familiar faces. We also offer a selection of jigsaw puzzles at bargain prices, to enhance your family festivities.

The period of Advent, in which we anticipate the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah, helps us remember and appreciate the message of hope for humanity that underlies Christmas: we need hope and joy very deeply this year. Let's pray for it.

A very Happy Christmas to you all from us at Christ Church, Fulmodeston.



December Services and events

Sat 5	Advent Craft Fair 10.00am – 1pm-ish
Sun 6	4pm Evening Prayer
Sun 13	11am Holy Communion (BCP)
Sun 20	4pm Carols around the Crib for everyone
Fri 25	11.00am Christmas Day Family Communion
Sun 27	10am Parish Communion with Fakenham

Carolyn Thomas-Coxhead





December Walks with Fakenham Ramblers



Please note that ALL walks now start at 10am.
Bring a packed lunch on Saturday walks which are generally over 6 miles. Otherwise, sturdy boots and waterproofs are all that's required. Please arrive ten minutes or so before the walk start time.

Please contact the walk leader for up-to-date walk information.

Date & Time	Venue	Grid Reference Postcode Distance	Walk Leader(s)
Wed 2nd Dec 10am	**Fakenham, Shereford & Christmas Tree Festival visit** Park/meet at Aldiss Park [behind Fakenham Tyres]	**OS 238/ 920292 NR21 7LA** **5.5** miles	**Lesley & Christine** 07875 177210
Sat 12th Dec 10am	**Reepham Figure of 8** - Park/meet at Stimpsons Piece, Bartles Court	**OS 238/ 100233 NR10 4LL** 5.3 or 9.5 miles	**Ann** 07749 523089
Wed 16th Dec 10am	**Salle -** Park/meet at Salle Church	**OS 238/ 110249 NR10 4SE** 5.8 miles	**Sandra** 01603 755121

Old Fakenhamian

This month's column sits against the ghastly backdrop of the death, destruction and turmoil of the Middle East, and talks about better days.

In the early Seventies, my older sister was living in Abu Dhabi and one Easter she invited me to visit her, generously paying my airfares. There were no direct flights to the Arabian Gulf, so I flew via Beirut in Lebanon. What a sophisticated place Beirut was, with an airport full of incredibly well-dressed and prosperous looking people. In fact, it was known as the Paris of the Middle East, its well-educated citizens speaking Arabic, French and English and it was the banking and business hub of the region.

Abu Dhabi was quite different. The great oil rush was in its infancy. Roads and infrastructure were being built and often the water and power was cut off and my sister used to fill her bath in anticipation of these cuts. There were no hotels and when we went to Sharjah, we stayed in 'The Grand Flotel' essentially a cruise ship moored in the harbour. We also visited Ras al Khaima, which was essentially an oasis, absolutely beautiful, just like a very large garden (in fact the Arabic word for paradise is 'jannah' which literally translates to 'garden'), with running streams, small fields full of crops tended by its citizens in traditional Arabic clothing and donkeys were their form of transport. We also visited Dubai with its harbour full of traditional Arab Dhows and street markets where women sat on the ground plying their wares – their faces covered by weird leather masks. On the way back to Abu Dhabi, we passed a small settlement in the desert and small children ran out to greet us, excited to see these strange beings in funny clothes and with unusually pale skins and hair. In Abu Dhabi there were no supermarkets, so we shopped in the Souks – large open markets with awnings as protection from the blazing sun and it was very exciting that seeing camels was commonplace.

The population was small, but the country was filling up with foreigners – Europeans and Americans on huge salaries and with many benefits such as apartments, cars and of course servants. And at the other end of the spectrum were those servants and construction workers from Pakistan.

I consider myself extremely privileged to have witnessed these countries as they were before 'progress' arrived. It was liking walking in the past and was something which had virtually disappeared some years later when I visited my sister again. Also, little did I know that I too would end up living in the Middle East, this time in Bahrain and many years later my son aged 11 and I spent Christmas and New Year in Beirut with our friends Mike and Leila. But those are other stories for another time!

Gilly Foortse



Can you help?

Since March this year, the Fakenham Food Market (on the second Saturday of every month) is becoming a staple in the town's event calendar.

Established by local business volunteers, our monthly markets bring visitors into town, support local producers and provide a valued community event. As the Fakenham Food Market continues to grow, so does the need to increase the number of the enthusiastic organising committee.

If you value the markets, have some experience of trading or in volunteering for community-based events, and would like to be involved then please get in touch.

Email Fakenhamfoodmarket@gmail.com to find out more.

Together, we can secure the future of this community event.

Yours faithfully,

The Fakenham Food Market Team



A Christmas Message from Fakenham Town Council

As another year draws to a close, the Town Council's staff and councillors would like to wish all residents and businesses a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported local events, shared their views on community projects, volunteered their time, and helped make Fakenham such a vibrant and welcoming town. We look forward to continuing to work together in 2027 to deliver improvements and opportunities that benefit our community.

We hope you enjoy a peaceful festive season with family and friends, and we send our very best wishes for the year ahead.

Angela Glynn, Chairman
Lesley Meanley, Town Clerk

Recycle your real Christmas tree 7 – 9 Jan 2027

Local charity, Break, makes recycling your real Christmas tree after the festivities simple, while changing the lives of young people in and leaving care in Norfolk.
Book by midnight Sunday 3 January 2027 for hassle-free tree collection and recycling!

Collection dates: **Eligible postcodes can book collection between 7-9 January 2027** for a small donation. All proceeds directly support Break's work with children and young people in care.

Suggested donation amounts: £20, £30, £50 & £120 (perfect if you have multiple trees!)

Eligible postcodes:
PE30, PE31, PE32, PE33, PE34, PE35, PE36, PE37, PE38, NR10, NR11, NR12, NR13 1, NR13 2, NR20 4, NR20 5, NR21, NR22, NR23, NR24, NR25 7, NR25 9, NR28, IP24, IP25 and IP26.

Break also needs volunteers to collect trees in January. Get involved and make a difference in your community.

Contact: www.break-charity.org to book or volunteer for collections to recycle trees.

Volunteers needed!

The Fakenham Talking Times - an audio newspaper for people with visual impairments - needs new volunteers for two key roles:

- Editor - responsible for compiling the news stories for each edition. Full training will be provided for this position which can be done from home.
- Treasurer - responsible for monitoring the bank accounts, preparing the annual return to the Charity Commission, and for reporting on the accounts at the Annual General Meeting.

Please get in touch with secretary@fakenhamtalkingtimes.org



Baby & Children's Clothes Swap

Fakenham Parish Church
Monday 9.45 - 11 am @ Stepping Stones
Thursday 10 - 12.30pm

A warm welcome awaits you.
Clothes available from birth to 11 yrs
Freshly laundered and free of charge

Mothers' Union - Caring for the young family

FAKENHAM PARISH CHURCH

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

LITTLE ANGELS PRE SCHOOL

Little Angels Pre School
The Stringer Ground
Fakenham Rugby Club
NR21 9RZ

Contact number: 07903771817
FB: Little Angels pre school

Little Angels Pre-School
Growing there wings, to catch their dreams

Welcomes children
18 months to school age.

We accept all Funding
9month funding (for an 18 month old start), 2,3 and 4 year funding accepted



Opening times
Monday -Thursday 8:30-4
Friday -8:30-1
Term time only

Charity number: 1034803

Ryburgh Christmas Market

Sat 5th Dec
9.30 – 12 noon

Free entry

St. Andrew's Church,
NR21 0EB

St. Andrew's Pantry open.
Gifts, books and plants
Details from: 01328 829413

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Adjacent to Fakenham Racecourse

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Wishing you a happy and blessed Christmas, from The Beacon Team



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01328-863700 or 07946-078896
Keeping your property in prime condition
mikecaesari@talktalk.net
www.mikecaesari.co.uk

Advice for Christmas and the year ahead - Keep warm, stay safe, don't drink and drive, and support your local traders in 2027!

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