

## Hawstead 2025: Local History Recorder's Review

2025 was dominated by disruption – for various reasons – to our local roads. From February till the end of April a nearby housing development (Abbot's Vale, to eventually comprise 1200 new homes on the Eastern side of the A134) required the construction of a large roundabout on the main road and this meant closure of this road on a number of weekends, with an official 43-mile diversion. Our village roads, particularly the narrow Hawstead Lane and Bells Lane became totally overwhelmed with traffic trying to find alternatives. Liaison between Suffolk Highways, the developer and local parish councils was woefully inadequate, including an initial meeting before commencement of works to which Hawstead PC was not invited and another one arranged later which significant parties did not attend. Local roads were severely damaged (not only in Hawstead) and although Hopkins Homes, the developer reportedly was due to spend £353,863 on "off-site highway improvements" at the time of writing (January 2026) there is no sign that any of this damage has been addressed.



The construction of this roundabout meant closure of the A134 on 8 weekends over 12 weeks

A meeting of the village Parish Council (PC) on February 21<sup>st</sup> was attended by 40 villagers which must be a record! The PC made many representations, had meetings with our two local MPs and others and initiated traffic counts as evidence of the disruption: perhaps the only real 'victory' was in getting the Low Green road reopened (which will have also helped the artisan bakery located on that road which had feared for its survival).



In an effort, to keep vehicles off the Village Green, a sign indicating a Nature Reserve was installed



The closure of local roads (this is Low Green) caused mayhem on Bells Lane and (here) Hawstead Lane)



In the summer, Whepstead Road was closed for a number of pothole repairs



This was September at The Pound



Was this closure sign (Horsecroft Road) really needed?



Then later in September – and without warning – we were invaded by a gang of labourers who were installing optical fibre cable to Hawstead. This has brought a connection point at the roadside to each household so that when it goes ‘live’ (not achieved by the end of 2025) residents will be able, for a subscription fee, to change from their existing means of access to the Internet to this new, faster service.



Up till now, Internet has been accessed via optical fibre to two or three points in Hawstead, (eg a green metal box on the corner of the Green) and then the old copper wires to individual properties.

### **Hawstead Parish Council (PC)**

The PC met on nine occasions during the year. The usual six bimonthly ones were augmented by two which were essentially for discussion about planning applications and one already mentioned in February called because of concerns about the A134 closure. At the May AGM Henry Brewis was elected Chairman for the coming year: Alex Brewis having been co-opted onto the PC in January, was elected as Vice-Chairman.

At the end of the Financial Year 2024-25, there having been receipts of £10,892 and payments of £12,932 the bank holdings of the PC stood at £14,445. A ‘Register of Assets’ dated 15/05/25 gave a total value of £24,066.

Partly as a result of the disruption on our roads, the PC in March supported the re-introduction of ‘Speedwatch’, a programme for monitoring the speed of vehicle through Hawstead. With 8 volunteers recruited and training from the Police, this got off the ground in early Autumn, rotating between The Pound, the Village Green and a point along Whepstead Road. The PC followed this with a plan to improve the monitoring of traffic speeds though the purchase of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) at a cost of £2,590+VAT.

It was agreed that, following a lapse, filming of PC meetings would be re-introduced: by the end of the year, those from March, May and September are available on the Internet via the video service “YouTube”.



# Hawstead Parish Council

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Despite the availability of a government grant, the idea of installing an electric vehicle charging point at the Village Hall carpark was voted against, this following a discussion with another local PC where there is one which is not used much and consequently does not generate sufficient revenue to justify itself.

In 2024 a planning application to West Suffolk Council for a new agricultural building off Lawshall Road had been refused as part of it was deemed too near the road. A resubmission this year resulted in the applicant being told that prior approval by the Authority is not required (however, the works must be carried out exactly in accordance with the details submitted). (See photo later in this document.) Significant other planning applications included the use of land on Whepstead Road for a new build house (refused); alterations to a house on Horsecroft Road (allowed after considerable deliberation because of 'listed building' status); and the conversion of part of the Metcalfe Arms/Maglia Rosso building to 3 holiday lets (allowed – see section on Maglia Rosso). In addition, an outline planning submission for a new build in Bull Lane, Pinford End, made at the end of 2024 was still described as 'pending' at the end of this year. Also pending was an application for extensive work to be done on a small, very old semi-detached cottage in Lawshall Road.

## Hawstead Community Council (HCC)

During 2025 some regular events were put on by HCC:

- In March there was a village trip to see 'The Gruffalo' at the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds
- In April the Easter Egg Hunt was held
- In May the Plant Fair raised £1,290 and coincided with the opening of the refurbished and re-equipped playground



A general view of the Plant Fair (more inside the Hall) Dave Dawson cuts the ribbon on the new play area

- In July there was the annual BBQ
- At the end of August the village “Fun Day” took place and raised £1,300 for HCC funds
- On 27th September the Macmillan coffee morning raised £1,303
- At the end of November HCC hosted an Advent service in the Village Hall, and the Christmas tree lights were switched on



This ‘Band of Brothers’ erected the Christmas Tree

....and this is how it looked at night

The ‘Triple-20s’ Christmas lunch in the Village Hall (below)



- In December there was the usual 'triple-20s lunch' and on New Year's Eve a successful Hootenanny party took place in the Village Hall
- There was to have been a Quiz evening in Mid-November but this was postponed till the New Year as a large number of potential contestants were unavailable.

During the year the Mobile Library van continued to call at the Village Hall each fourth Tuesday, but the practice of opening the Hall with coffee and biscuits available stopped – as did the fish and chip van which had been calling on Wednesday evenings. In May they said it wasn't viable due to insufficient interest.

Village Voice was published four times during 2025, keeping us all informed about events and activities within Hawstead.

HCC held an AGM on 12th May. The Treasurer reported a bank holding of £45,737, following receipts of £36,289 and expenses of £35,726. The largest item listed within receipts was wedding receptions, of which there had been 7 during the past year. It was noted, however, that there would shortly be a big expenditure following the play area renovations and this was later reported in Village Voice to have been £39,674.

### **All Saints Church**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) continued to operate the '100 Club' (£24 per person p.a.) with half the proceeds going in prizes and half for Church funds.

There was a Lent Lunch in the Village Hall on 14 March which raised £265 for charity.

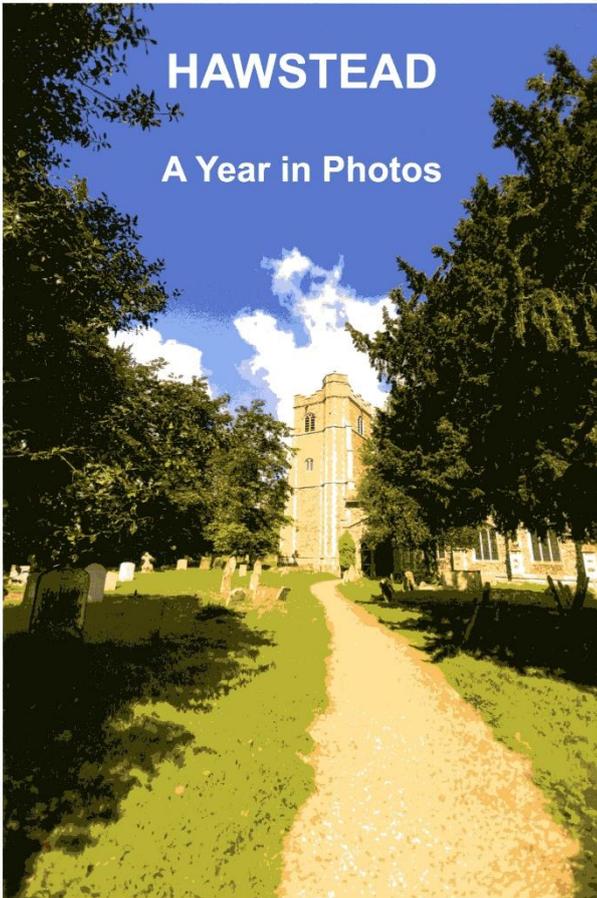
A team of volunteers within the village continued to mow and trim the grass in the churchyard on a monthly basis, also trying to keep the nettles and brambles from expanding their domain in the borders and hedges. Unfortunately the hedges are being noticeably denuded by the box tree caterpillar.

At the end of the year a search on YouTube revealed a total of eight video recordings with All Saints Hawstead as their subject. The oldest was filmed in 2012 and the most recent in October 2025. They range from one which is just a few seconds, recording the sound of the bells, through to one which concentrates mostly on the church interior, which is 33 minutes long. Most are reasonably amateurish in production – but all are interesting - and a couple display the use of a drone to film the exterior of the building.

There were two weddings in the Church this year (Glen Cundy and Alice Jackson in June and Benjamin Winstanley and Harriet Duffy in August) and two cremation burials. There were several funeral services:

- Caroline Miller (28/01) Caroline had lived at Hillside, Whepstead Road
- Ethel Lebbon (31/03) Ethel had lived at Pinford End (cremation burial)
- Tessa Bovill (27/08) Tessa was the daughter of Giles and Ali Bovill of Horsecroft Road (cremation burial)
- Vera Goodale (07/10) had moved into Bury St Edmunds after her husband died in 1977. He was Flying Officer Brian Goodale and had been the wireless operator of a Lancaster bomber during the Dambuster raid of May 1943. They had lived at High Trees, Lawshall Road
- Patricia Edgar (03/11) lived for a number of years in the 1980's with her family at Pye House, Lawshall Road: they then moved to 'Sideways' in Lawshall.

Our new Rector, Rev. Anita Rooney settled into her first rural appointment (based at Horringer): she took part in the annual Historic Churches sponsored bike ride in September and raised £402.



As a memorial to Caroline Miller, a good friend of hers, Rick Senley produced a book of photographs for sale to Hawstead residents. Rick is a professional photographer and this is a superb example of his work. It is over 200 pages long and comprises photos of villagers, mostly in their home garden setting, interspersed with landscape scenes, some clearly taken via a drone. He is not a local resident so the pictures were taken over a period of time on occasions when he was able to come to Hawstead, make arrangements to liaise with individuals or families and take his photos.

### **Maglia Rosso**

It was a shock to read an announcement on 24<sup>th</sup> February from the owners that cycle sales at Maglia Rosso would be stopping this year. In the meantime other activities were continuing: there was an evening of 'Lightning Talks' on January 17<sup>th</sup> to kick the New Year off, with a total of 9 contributors. Sadly, a similar event later in the year was called off due to lack of support. But there were quiz evenings scattered through the year and other special events included a talk in February by Mark Sinnett on

making steel frames for bikes. There was a series of 'Motors@Maglia' classic car gatherings (with live music to accompany) on Saturdays between April and September; a dog show on 27<sup>th</sup> September; and in June a lady called Chloe led a 'Yoga for Cyclists' event in the garden. Then on 21<sup>st</sup> October "world record breaker" Dan Bigham came to speak to a sell-out audience of 50 and received a standing ovation after his talk.

There were a couple of cycle events early on in the year. In April about 60 riders took part in the annual 'Mille Maglia' race, either 50 or 100 km on road and track or 64 or 130 km just on road. Then on 11<sup>th</sup> May the St Nicholas Hospice cycle ride took place. In good weather over 125 riders completed distances ranging between 15-60 miles and raised money for the Hospice in the process. As well as these, a programme of Tuesday and Friday informal rides continued during the year, as in previous years.

On 13 August Barry and Matt Denny announced that they had submitted a planning application to convert part of the premises into three holiday lets, leaving the café and some of the shop operation to continue (ie servicing, repairs, bike-fits and bike hire). This planning application was eventually approved in December.

Nevertheless, on 13 November we were told that both the shop and café would close on 23 December and would not open again in January. The 'Wigwam' glamping pods operate separately and these are continuing to be available. There are only two comments/evaluations on the Wigwam website but they give the operation a score of 4.5 out of 5.

### OUR WIGWAM® CABINS

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- ✓ Fitted kitchenette
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- ✓ TV & WiFi
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Wigwam® Holidays Maglia Rosso is tucked away in the East Anglian countryside. Within easy reach of forests, adventure parks and the delights of the Suffolk coast. It is near to the towns of Bury St Edmunds and the quaint villages of Lavenham, Long Melford and Clare.



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#### LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

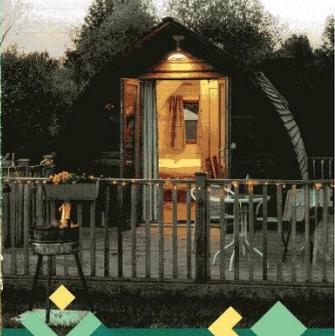
Cycling for all ages and abilities at Maglia Rosso Cycling Centre. Horse racing at Newmarket. Gardens, fine dining and history in Bury St. Edmunds. Nature trails and thrilling activities in Thetford Forest. Seaside attractions at Felixstowe.

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# GLAMPING AT ITS BEST

— in Suffolk —



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*holidays*

## Great War Huts (GWH)

Hutted Histories (a series of evening talks) was hosted during the year by GWH:

- March: "A Bridge Too Far Fetched?"
- April: "Gas: Protection Against Chemical Weapons During the Great War"
- May: "Prepared for War: Uniforms and Equipment of the Great War British Soldier"
- June: a talk by Richard van Emden about the 280 Great War Veterans he has met and interviewed
- July: "Watershed: Mahatma Gandhi and the First World War"
- August: Debbie Land from the Shuttleworth Collection talked about pioneering women in motoring and aviation.
- September: An illustrated talk with unusual items in the GWH collection
- October: Megan Wang of the RAF Museum at Hendon (formerly of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) talked about The Commemoration & Care of First World War dead buried in the UK
- November: "They Shall not Grow Mould" (British Army biscuits) by Lyndsay Knight

Other events:

- Father's Day: "Tea and Trenches" with Taff Gillingham
- 6th Gallipoli Association Regional Conference 14 June
- "Football at War: Exploring Football in the First World War" - a day long event with 4 visiting speakers as well as Taff
- August: "Training for Trenches" for youngsters
- For Heritage Open Days - a Site Tour on 4th October

- 1 - 24 December: HutVent, videos examining equipment made, worn etc applicable to 1915, 110 years ago. One per day
- “Trenches by candlelight” events in December



An Early Gas Mask



The GWH team on Christmas Day 2025: Taff, Kev Smith & Lyndsay

The GWH team have been extending the 1915 trenches and hope to have the 1914 section completed by the end of 2026. Their school visits continue to be very popular and the team plan to encourage more school visits in 2026.

**Other Events Worth Mentioning**

There is a bus service between Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury which passes through Hawstead. A few years ago our bus service was due to be axed but after representations by villagers it was grudgingly reprieved, with just for one service on one day per week. This August it came back as a daily service (except Sunday). There are two buses each way, one in the morning, one in the afternoon.

The Anglia Water pipeline (in our area) appeared to have been completed by the end of 2025. Early in the year work was continuing in the Flat Farm area but by June as seen from Lawshall Road the ridge of what was probably topsoil was seen to have been bulldozed down to a level landscape:



A view in March from Bells Lane



Bulldozer with land to be returned to agriculture



This grain store was erected in the south corner of Cooks Field just off Lawshall Road. A tractor parade went through Hawstead on May 18th.



The bridge over the Lark in the 'Crank's' was reported unsafe and was repaired by the end of the year.

## Lark View Residential Care Home

📍 Pinford End House, Church Road, Bury St Edmunds IP29 5NU  
 gabby@serenityliving.co.uk | 01284663850 | www.serenityliving.co.uk

Former Pinford End Nursing Home reopened in early February with a new name and ownership.

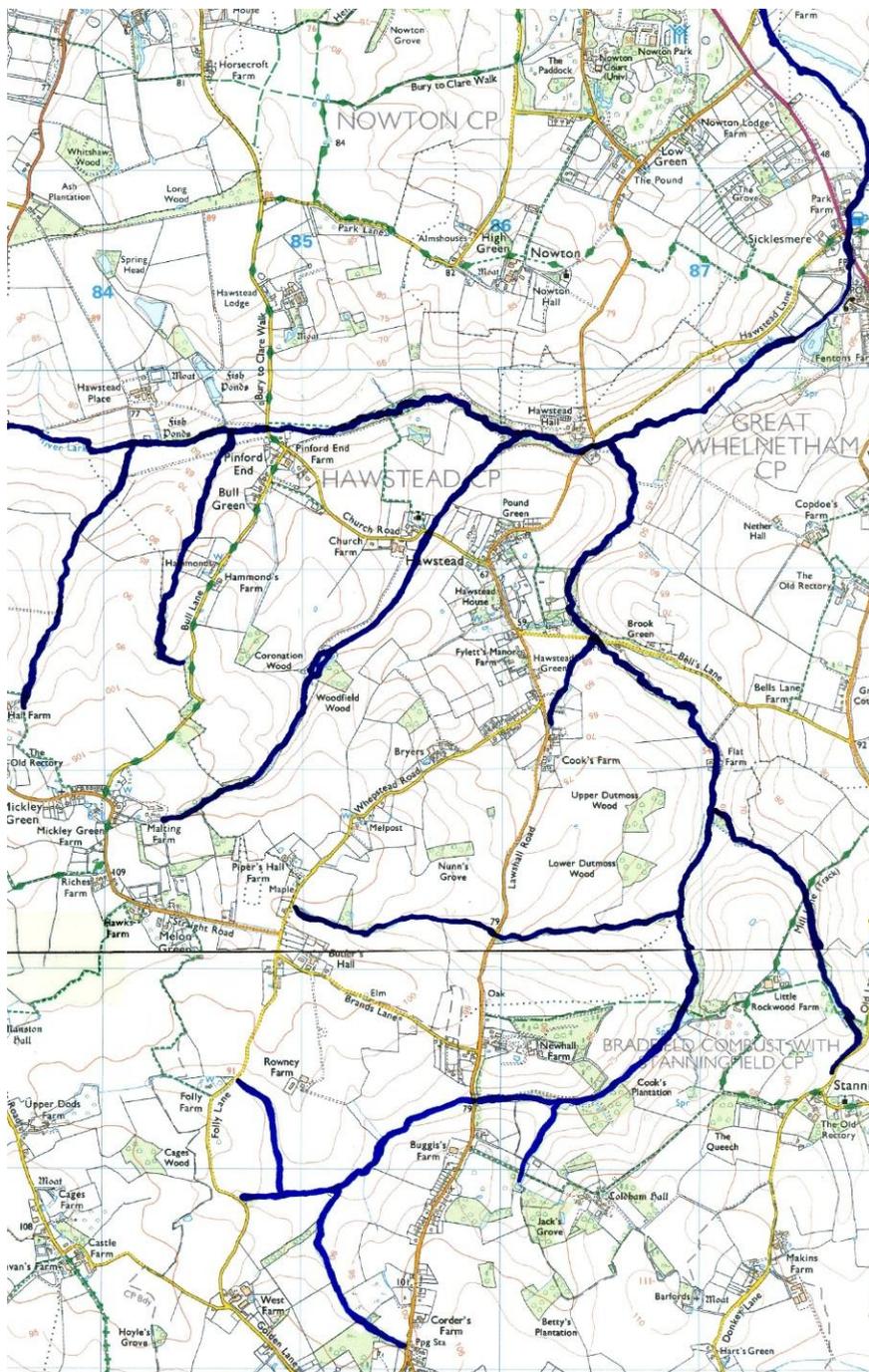
## The River Lark in Hawstead

The headwaters of the River Lark (one of the chalk streams of southern England) start in Lawshall, Stanningfield and Wkepstead, but all join at various points in the parish of Hawstead. The 'River Lark Catchment Partnership' (RLCP) has been in existence since 2015 with the mission to 'conserve, preserve and improve the River Lark and its catchment area for the benefit of the public'. Ros Alexander of Hawstead is the Chair of this Partnership which is working with Anglian Water to deliver a 'flagship chalk stream restoration project' - one of just nine nationally. She said during 2025 that she is 'reasonably confident that we will be able to mount a comprehensive project to improve summer flows and reduce flood events in the headwaters.'

The Lark extends all the way to Prickwillow in the Fens but the headwaters are seen as crucially important, there being a saying "look after the headwaters and the river looks after itself".

Research is taking place here; RLCP's citizen scientists are regularly collecting water samples to test for Phosphate, Ammonia, pH and temperature; fifteen Seneye sensors (including one in the village) are continuously monitoring dissolved oxygen and dissolved ammonia, while there is periodic testing for eDNA (including different strains of e-coli), as well as complex modern chemicals. There are also 10 sediment tubes positioned across the catchment (again including one in the village) to collect silt for analysis at the University of Southampton as part of a 'Fluvial Audit'. Professor David Sear's interim report was received just before Christmas 2025 and has already transformed understanding of the river and its relationship with the underlying geology and the wider landscape.

Associated with this, RLCP has received a donation of £10K. This means that the waterways design company Aquamaintain has been commissioned to design a solution for the flooding caused by the small but flashy tributary that runs along the far side of the Village Green and under the culvert in Bells Lane, and to repair the river bank, which is currently being washed away.



## Not such good news:



As well as upending his car, this driver managed to destroy hedges bordering the road at the Pound in May

Fly-tipping on Horsecroft Road July 2025

## Hawstead Book Club

The following books were read by members of the Book Club in 2025

The Mad Women's Ball – Victoria Mas

Light Between Oceans - M L Stedman

The House by the Dvina - Eugenie Fraser

The Stationery Shop of Tehran – Marjan Kamali

The Phone Box at the Edge of the World – Laura Imai Messina

The Smoke Jumper – Nicholas Evans

A Gentleman In Moscow – Amor Towles

Home – Penny Parks

Here One Moment - Liane Moriarty

The Foundling - Tracey Halls

Butter - Asako Yuzuki

At the end of the year "A Gentleman In Moscow" was voted the favourite by members of the club

## Hawstead Appreciation and Tasting Society (HATS)



The wine club enjoyed member presentations on the following topics:

- Dry(ish) January
- Some of the Fletchers' favourite tipples
- Mirabeau Rose and Rioja
- Summer wines
- Wines with attractive labels
- A taste of France
- ASDA extra special selection
- Vino Gusto selection

## Properties for Sale in Hawstead, 2025

The following properties were offered for sale during 2025. (There may have been one or two more.) All apart from the Mark Ewin offering appeared to be still on the market at the end of the year.



Cullum House (The Old School House) £625K



Brook View, Bells Lane £650K



Bryers Barn,  
Hawstead, Suffolk.

Bryers Barn, Whepstead Road (£1.275M)



The Green, Hawstead, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 5NP

MARK EWIN  
BURY ST EDMUNDS

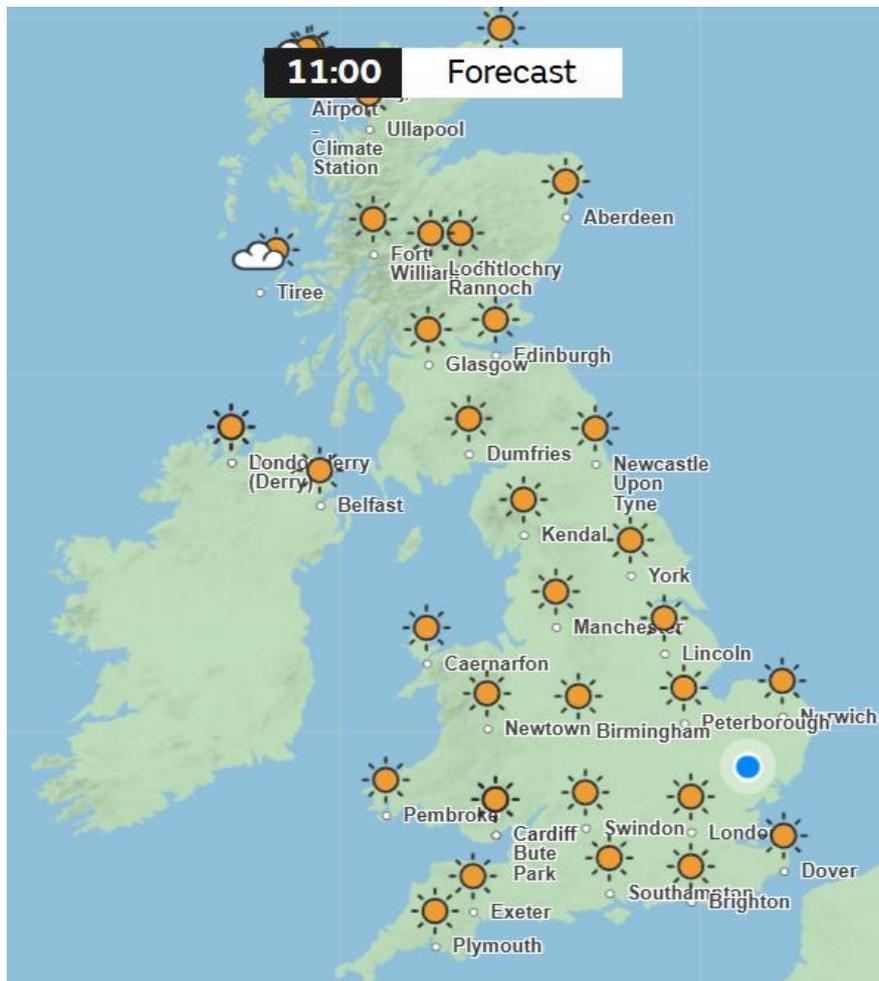
Greenacre, The Green (£375K+)

### Crime Statistics 2025

During 2025 there were 7 offences committed in Hawstead according to Suffolk Police. 4 of these were described as 'violence/sexual' offences, and all occurred in the Pinford End area; there was also 1 offence each of burglary, criminal damage and theft.

### Postscript

Just to show that sometimes the sun does shine over the whole of the United Kingdom! (July 11th)



Andy Parrett  
03/02/2026