

# Challenge

The Parish Newsletter of Weston Colville and West Wrating

The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

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## Easter Day Service

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March, 9.30 am  
St Mary's, Weston Colville

Celebrate Easter with fire!



Join us around an outside fire to start the Easter service. We will then light a special candle and process into church for a lively celebration of Easter Day – the most important day in the Christian calendar.

There will be some 'fizz' and refreshments with Simnel cake at a reception after the service, plus the all-important Easter Egg hunt in the churchyard.

Suitable for all ages

**Come and share the joy of Easter!**

## Weston Colville Tea & Cakes

It is wonderful to see how our Tea & Cakes afternoons bring together all ages in our village community.

If you would like to join us, our next afternoon will be on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April in the Reading Room from 3.30 to 5.00 pm. We look forward to meeting you there.

*Val and the Team*

## West Wrating Café

Normal service is resumed. The next café will be on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 10.30 - 12 noon in the village hall. Spring is definitely here and we are returning to our regular fresh coffee, tea and of course delicious homemade cakes, provided by our generous bakers. We have toys for the children and table tennis for those who fancy a bit of exercise. Do join us; everyone is welcome.

*Sherry & Jan*

## Weston Colville Reading Room – 'Pub' Quiz

We're holding our next quiz on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April at 8 pm. Once again September's winning team will be defending the trophy (see one of their number proudly holding it here, as they celebrate).



Could you take it off them? Come as a fully-formed team, or join one when you arrive. Up to five per team, entry £2 per person. Bar includes wine, cider and draft ale. All welcome.

*jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com, 291475*



## ***Soup Lunches Continue . . .***

. . . except they might not all be soup! With the support of ACRE and the Reading Room Trust, we are able to continue meeting for a most convivial lunch every Wednesday in the Reading Room until 29<sup>th</sup> May. The lunch is free, but donations are welcome. We gather any time after 11.30 to sit down at 12.30, and as summer approaches we'll move the menu to Ploughman's Lunches and light salads. After a short Easter break (no lunch on 3<sup>rd</sup> April), we commence again on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Please join us.

My sincere thanks to all those who have volunteered to set up tables and host these events. If you'd like to join the team, please contact me.

**Bob Coates** ([cheviotbob@me.com](mailto:cheviotbob@me.com), 07785 361345)

*Many of us will echo the thanks to all those involved, especially to Bob for his work in organising these enjoyable lunches.*

**Anne Bragg**

## ***Reading Room Trustees Update***

After many many years of fantastic service the Weston Colville Reading Room is losing three stalwart trustees: Peter Harris, Bob Coates, and Alan Ogden. I am pleased to say that two new trustees will be joining us this month, but we are on the look out for more help to undertake the Reading Rooms' responsibilities. We are especially looking for someone to help with the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the hall, that Peter has so diligently done until now. It may be possible to recompense a suitable person(s). If you would like an informal chat them please contact me.

**Matt Jackson** (07881 916468, [mhj71@live.com](mailto:mhj71@live.com))

## ***West Wrattling Book Club***

Our book for March was 'My Friends' by Hisham Matar. This is the story of a Libyan student and his two friends, caught up in the 1984 protest outside the Libyan Embassy in London, and the resulting bloodshed, including the death of WPC Yvonne Fletcher. Most of us had memories of this. The book goes on to chart the effects of this on their lives and relationships. As a study of a life in exile it opens a window into what it is like to be unable to return to your country and family, to always be looking over one's shoulder, and finding it difficult to trust others. It is, also, a window into Libyan culture. Words such as amazing, captivated, wonderful, fascinating and lovely were amongst those used to describe this story. Although not a page-turner, it is not difficult to read, with the long sentences giving it the feeling of a spoken discourse. This is definitely a recommended read. Scores were all 9 out of 10.

In the light of recent coverage of Daphne du Maurier's life and dramatisation of some of her stories on BBC Radio 4, our next read is an old friend, 'Jamaica Inn'. We will meet to discuss it on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April at The Chestnut Tree at 7.30 pm.

**Linda Gorman** (290653)

## ***Oil Co-operative***

Ordering deadline: noon, Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Church End to the bottom of Mill Hill:**

Alastair Douglas (291475 or [salguoda@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:salguoda@hotmail.co.uk))

### **Chapel Road, Common Road, The Green, Horseshoe Lane:**

Anne Vidler (290010 or [anne.vidler@talk21.com](mailto:anne.vidler@talk21.com))

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Peter Harris (07879 444126 or [sowesticom@gmail.com](mailto:sowesticom@gmail.com))

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### *The Chestnut Tree*

Thank you for the turn out at the quiz on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March, which was won by the Dunces after a three-way tie. Our next quiz will be on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 6.30 start, when we will again be joined by LOL's Pizzas.

Our beer festival is the over the second May bank holiday, starting on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May with Morris dancers in the evening. There will be live music and a few different food options over the weekend – full details to be confirmed.

*Mark & Joanna*

### *Displaced Persons at Wratting Common*

I am trying to find out more about the European Volunteer Workers, usually referred to as Displaced Persons (DPs), who arrived in the summer of 1947 to stay at the Wratting Common airbase after the RAF had left. There are one or two references to them on the excellent 'History of RAF Wratting Common' website (eg the photo on page 14 of the gallery), but if any Challenge readers have anything further to share, please do get in touch with me. I'd love to hear from you.

*Gabrielle Cliff Hodges*

(gabrielle.cliffhodes@cantab.net, 07979 554758)



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### *Church Bell Ringing*

Have you ever wanted to try bell ringing? Brinkley, Weston Colville and West Wratting are all looking for new ringers to join their bands and so we have scheduled an open morning for any potential new ringers: Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 10 am to 12 noon, at Brinkley Church.



There will be the opportunity to chat to ringers, turn a bell over (with support), tour the tower and see the bells and grab a tea, coffee and piece of cake! There will also be a ringing demonstration during the morning.

It's not as easy as just pulling a rope, so come and find out what its all about! Bell ringing is an ancient tradition and we're a friendly bunch – there is a commitment involved when learning, to be safe, but you'll be gaining a great hobby and be transported into a whole new world of ringing.

If you'd like a chat, the various Tower Captains are listed below:

Brinkley:	Liz Gibson (07745 627287)
Weston Colville:	Ian Ashbridge (07870 636019)
West Wratting:	Mike Rowland (01223 290788)

*Ian Ashbridge*

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Parish History	Local Sports	Village Hall Events
Church News	Parish Matters	Village Calendar

**Please send us your contributions, events, notices, photos and comments.**

**From the Rectory**

This spring is a time of farewells in our Granta Vale churches. Our wonderful curate Ben Brady, is shortly to leave for pastures new as he will be taking up a new post as Team Vicar in the Berkhamsted Team Ministry – with special responsibility for Holy Trinity, Potten End – in the Diocese of St Albans. Typically, a curacy is around three years but because Ben had already completed a first curacy of a year and a half in the Manchester diocese before he came to us in November 2022, he is now ready to move on to his next role.



It's been a great joy to have Ben as part of our ministry team. He has carried out his ministry with a sense of warmth, prayerfulness and dedication and he will be much missed, especially in Great and Little Abington where he lives. We will be praying for him as he prepares to move house and start his new role. Ben's last service here will be our united service on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 11 am, after which there will be refreshments and an opportunity to say goodbye to Ben. All are welcome to attend!

We will also be saying farewell to Hannah Threlfall in her role as community minister in late May. I'm delighted to say, however, that Hannah won't be leaving us as she will become our new curate in the summer! Hannah will be ordained at Ely Cathedral on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June, after which she will be serving her curacy in our group of churches. Our other two ordinands, Natalie and Rhona, however, will be departing in June as they prepare for ordination and their curacies: Natalie in the Salisbury diocese and Rhona much closer by in the Anglesey group of churches.

The book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament says that 'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens'. As we acknowledge the coming weeks as a time of farewell and pray for Ben, Hannah, Natalie and Rhona as they prepare for their new roles, these changes may remind us we may look for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all the times and seasons of our lives.

**Revd Iain McColl**

**Calling All Bears**

A special children's event for people of all ages: all teddy bears are invited to a sleepover in St Mary's church on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> April.



The bears are invited to church with their owners at 4 pm on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April. They will need everything that is required for a happy bear's night away from home, eg bed (or comfortable box), sleeping bag/blanket, toothbrush, favourite toy, reading book, etc. We can cater for shy bears or those who are afraid of the dark!



The following morning the owners can recover their bears from 9.30 am, for a 10 am special teddy service and a chance to discover

the antics their bears have been up to away from their families.



As with all good sleepovers, each bear and owner will have a goodie bag to take home plus fun and games during the service.

Adults with bears are welcome too, provided they are children at heart.

**Philippa Coates (cheviotpfc@me.com)**

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**Weston Colville Spring Lunch**

About thirty people enjoyed the excellent Spring Lunch in the Weston Colville Reading Room on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March. The tables were beautifully seasonal with vases of fresh spring flowers on each one. The delicious two-course lunch – roast pork, roast potatoes, vegetables, stuffing, apple sauce and gravy, or vegetable lasagne for vegetarians, plus a yummy choice of puddings – was really tasty. A range of drinks, plus coffee/tea, sweets and biscuits afterwards, also afforded the opportunity for people to while away the time and chat.



Huge thanks are due to Jane Pryor for organising the event, as well as to Emma Kaye and Steven Wheeler for doing the lion’s share of the cooking. Many thanks, too, to everyone else who helped with cooking, serving, running the raffle, clearing away, washing up and putting back the furniture.

During the afternoon the rain eased off and the sun came out. It was a fitting end to an event which – in these often dark times – was truly appreciated.

*Gabrielle Cliff Hodges*

**London Marathon for Little Havens Hospice**

I am raising sponsorship funds for my London Marathon April 2024 challenge. My chosen charity is **Little Havens Hospice** who support terminally ill children in Essex. My target is £1,750; I have currently raised £1,275 – 72% of target – hooray! – thank you so much for your generous donations to date.



I have also been busy undertaking lots of gardening and other work, so thank you for the jobs being put my way. I

continue to offer the following services in return for donations:

- ★I can do odd jobs like gardening, dog walking, hoovering/cleaning, window cleaning;
- ★I am a qualified insured Chartered Accountant, and am willing to undertake accounting and bookkeeping work, tax preparation, admin;
- ★also any other work such as painting and DIY, car washing etc.

I am available most Saturday afternoons for two hours between 2 and 4 pm but please feel free to contact me, as I may be able to be more flexible.

My Just Giving page: <https://rb.gy/q80ru>

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A massive thank you to all who donated to Austin Groenhart's fundraiser. His daddy, Ed, ran the Cambridge Half Marathon on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and raised a total of £2,606 for Addenbrookes Charitable Trust at the time of writing this.

*Ed Groenhart*

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### Kingsway Solar Farm

The currently proposed development area will cover 50% of West Wrating parish!

There was a pretty heated public meeting at Balsham Sports Pavilion on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March at which a representative of Kingsway Solar Farm Ltd presented their proposed development of a large solar farm and battery storage facility.

This was the very first presentation to the public about the proposed development, which is at an early stage of development. The plans may well change from what we were shown at the meeting – so don't panic just yet; however I think it's important to share with you what we were told, even if it is still sketchy.

A map shown at the presentation was poor quality and difficult to understand, but from a photo I took of the slide I've created a new map which tries to show the information more clearly. You can see it best on the West Wrating village website, at <https://westwrating.org.uk/kingsway-solar-farm/> but here's a black and white simplified version.



The area of land that the developers want to lease for the solar farm is shown in grey. The parish boundaries are shown as dot-dash lines.

About half of West Wrating Parish will be converted to a solar farm!

The presenter said a deal is about to be signed for some of the gray area, which has several 'ongoing' surveys being carried out (environmental, ecological, archaeological, etc), but a member of the audience said he works for Dungate Farm – which is part of the gray area shown above – and according to him the owner has no intention of making a deal with Kingsway Solar. The areas shown may be somewhat ambitious. Perhaps the developers think everyone has their price!

This will be a massive solar farm, generating 500 MW, which is "enough for 253,000 houses". Overall the land used by the solar farm will be approximately 700 hectares. In addition to the sea of black glass panels that will occupy 65 - 75% of the land area the site will have large battery units that will store the energy that's generated until it is needed (and also download energy from the national grid to smooth-out supply). These storage units are each the size of a 20 ft shipping container, and there will be several hundred of them over the solar farm!

The motivation for building the solar farm here is convenient access to a very high voltage power line – a main trunk of the national grid. It's the same one that Wadlow Wind farm uses. A substation will need to be built to connect to that line, and access roads may need to be built. The life of the solar farm is expected to be 35 - 40 years, after which it will either be decommissioned and the land returned to as it is now, or the solar farm may be updated for another phase.

Various benefits to us were outlined, including funding to parish councils, free rooftop solar schemes for residents, electric vehicle charging points,

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permissive paths through the solar farm, use of local tradesmen during construction and for maintenance, and increased biodiversity.

This really is an ethical dilemma. We know we need to move away from fossil fuel power as soon as possible and that solar must be part of the mix of renewable energy sources. At the same time nobody wants to wreck the lovely country environment in which we've chosen to live.

There's very little information online about this proposed development. The information that was presented is new to the public, although the developers have been working on this project for about a year. As far as I understand, this is such a large project that it will not be going through the local planning process. It is not driven by subsidies, it is part of national policy, and the developers will only make money when electricity is supplied to the national grid (not when developing or building). Non-statutory public consultation will be happening over summer 2024, with statutory consultation in 2025. It's very important that you attend the public events to get your views across.

*Simon Chandler, West Wrating*

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**FINAL CALL** – applications for pupils starting university this September: the application form and supporting documents must be received by 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Normally one scholarship is awarded each year to the amount of £1,000.

Broadly speaking the degree course should be from one of the following:- Architecture, Engineering, Geography, History, Law, Mathematics, Sciences, Education, Medicine, Nursing, or Veterinary Medicine.

The applicant should be living in one of the parishes bordering the old RAF Wrating Common airfield – Great & Little Thurlow, West Wickham, Carlton cum Willingham, West Wrating, Weston Colville or Withersfield. The award is intended to be of assistance in the purchase of books, materials, equipment etc. The final decision and award will be made immediately after 'A' Level results and university offer are confirmed.

For further information about the trust and award please contact Jonathan Drury (01223 290087).

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*Jonathan Drury*

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### West Wrating Parish Council

Given below are some of the main details of the parish council meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March. The full draft minutes are available on the website and on the village noticeboards.

#### Electoral Matters:

*Position of Chair & Vice Chair* – Cllr O’Donovan proposed Cllr S Chandler for the position of chairman, seconded by Cllr Harvey. A vote was taken and all agreed. The position of vice chairman was not felt to be necessary at present.

Several policy and regulatory documents that had been updated based on the latest models from NALC and ICO were ratified by the council, specifically: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Publication Scheme under Freedom of Information, and General Privacy policy.

#### Planning:

*24/0192/FUL – Mines Park, erection of country house:* Weston Colville PC had been asked for their views on this application and they outlined the reasons for their objection. It was decided that West Wrating PC would not comment, but Cllr Harvey had

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distributed letters to the properties closest to the proposed development.

*CCC/23/110/FUL – Streetly Farm anaerobic biodigester:* no comment was made by West Wrating PC on this application, but information was provided and parishioners encouraged to make their own comments. Planning process is still underway.

**Finance:** the authorised payments and monies received are shown in the draft minutes on the noticeboards.

*Nomination of CAPALC to carry out Internal Audit for 2024* – this was agreed by the council after the chairman proposed the change.

*Parish Clerk’s gratuity* – this was set up in 2022 but has since been found not to be legal due to legislation from 2012. The chairman proposed that it be rescinded, seconded by Cllr O’Donovan, carried by majority vote. The PC hopes to find a legal way to honour the original gratuity endeavour, by seeking advice on how to provide a pension for the clerk.

#### Maintenance:

*Highway problems* – the flooding in the Causeway had been reported to Highways who visited the site and agreed that the drains and culvert will be pumped out within 30 days.

Repairs have been started on *potholes* along Six Mile Bottom Road, and will continue when the weather is drier.

*Refurbishment of village sign, pump, shelter, bench, wooden bus shelter, and wooden notice board* – four quotes had been received and the cost to refurbish these items would be in the region of £2,000. Heroes were recommended by Balsham PC (at a cost of £2,248). This quote was agreed by the council.



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**ACV Information:** The Chestnut Tree pub had been incorrectly taken off the Asset List after its sale, but following letters of complaint its ACV status has been restored until 2028.

### Village Hall:

*Registration of Village Hall* – documents to change the names of the registered owner from individuals to ‘Parish Council’ have been sent to The Land Registry.  
*Subsidence cover* – the parish clerk will inquire about the additional cost for adding this cover to the village hall insurance.

*Village Hall structure* – inspection report received from structural surveyor detailing work required to repair and strengthen, with estimated cost approximately £6,000. This needs to be budgeted by the Parish Council for later in 2024.

*Village Hall boundary with Lamb Yard development* – there has been good discussion between the Village Hall Management Committee, parish council, and the developers over agreeing to a maintenance strip between the two sites.

**Recreation Ground & Pavilion:** Cllr Parsons (Treasurer for West Wrattling Sports Pavilion Club) reported that funds were now very low mainly due to the loss of the junior teams. Accounts show a

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progressive decline in financial position over the last four years. It was agreed that the PC will consider whether or not they should financially support West Wrattling Sports Pavilion Club. A notice will be put in **Challenge** asking parishioners whether they think that is an appropriate use of Parish Council funds (and hence their council tax).

Cheques totalling £1,688 for grass cutting in 2023, back-payment for grass cutting, and hedge cutting were paid to West Wrattling Football Club.

An application for **20 mph speed restriction** through the village has been resubmitted by Cllr L Chandler.

**Applications for two vacancies on PC:** the councillors met in private to discuss the applications that have been received so far for the two vacancies. The closing date is 31st March. A decision will be made at the start of the next meeting in May.

**Reports by Dist Cllr Harvey and County Cllr Batchelor** are available on the website.

**The next parish council meeting** will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 pm. All are welcome.

*Jenny Richards, Parish Clerk*

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## **Weston Colville Parish Council**

A summary of items discussed at the meeting on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January is below. For the full minutes please visit <http://www.westoncolville.org>

**Co-option of a New Parish Councillor** – an application had been received from Rachael Jennings. The appointment of a new councillor by co-option was approved. Another Parishioner had enquired about becoming a councillor, but they could not attend until the May meeting.

**Pothole Repairs** – the County Councillor was asked for an update on fixing potholes in the county. The County Council is reviewing the contract for pothole repairs in the new financial year. In the meantime, residents should continue to report potholes and other road faults on the County Council Highways Dept website.

The County Councillor was thanked for pursuing the request for repairs to the pavement down Horseshoe Lane. This action has now been added to the County Council footway patching rolling programme.

**Flooding** – Cllr Garrod reported that the grips that had been reported on Chapel Road and Common Road had been cut recently, and had been more effective. Quotes had been received from three contractors for clearing the ditch by the Reading Room car park.

The ditch by the cricket field was discussed following concerns raised by a parishioner during the recent rains. The clerk will contact the Reading Room again, suggesting that an annual/biannual working party was formed to clear the ditch on foot, as only part of the ditch was accessible from the adjoining paddock, which would allow clearance by a machine.

Flooding on Common Road was discussed. Cllr Vidler reported that he had spoken with Brian Heffernan, and that he would hopefully be coming out in the new financial year with a team from Highways, Cllr Vidler would chase him to arrange the visit. It was suggested that the stream was last dredged six years ago, and it was suggested that the footpath bridges by number 63, and number 14 The Green would benefit from being raised. Cllr Durham will request this again.

Cllr Durham advised that parishioners were not allowed to block the road with sandbags or flood signs. Highways should be contacted as only they could close the road.

**MVAS** – two Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS) had been donated by a parishioner. They would be operated by a former councillor.

**Grass Cutting** – the grass cutting contracts should have been renewed from March 2024. New tenders were to be agreed in the autumn.

**Playground** – with the help of the working party, funding had been applied for. The results of the survey had been published in *Challenge*. The working party were thanked for their part in collecting and collating the results. Parishioners who had responded to the survey were thanked. The Reading Room had offered the area behind the cricket pavilion that was un-utilised to enlarge the fenced area. The clerk had sought quotes, the scrub had been cleared without financial approval. It was determined to wait until funding started being approved before works to increase the fenced area were to be made. It was suggested that a presentation of the plans would be made at the Annual Parish Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May. The clerk will ensure this was advertised in *Challenge* and via the village WhatsApp group.

**The date of the next parish council meeting** is Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May.

Parishioners are invited to attend the **Annual Parish Meeting** in the Reading Room on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May at 7 pm, where there will be a presentation about the proposed playground rejuvenation.

*Jess Ashbridge, Parish Clerk*

## The Chestnut Tree West Wrating

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### Brinkley Auction

There will be an auction of antiques and household goods in Brinkley Memorial Hall on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April at 2 pm (viewing on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April 5 - 8 pm and on morning of sale 10 am - 1 pm).

Time to have a spring clear out? We are looking for household items such as furniture, paintings, china and toys, and items for the garden.

We are asking you to give items to be sold on either a 20% commission, 50:50 basis or 100% donation, in aid of Brinkley Memorial Hall.

Contact Mathew or Susie Shuter for more details.

**(01638 508729, 07836656643, sshuter23gmail.com)**

### Buttercups Community Pre-School

We've been very excited to welcome back Super Star Sports each week to Buttercups, and the children have been having great fun in the playground with one of the coaches while learning new skills. We're very pleased to see the sun again!

The children have been making the most of our outside time – wearing wellies and armed with magnifying glasses we've been hunting out all manner of creepy crawlies in our much-enjoyed bug hunts.

Buttercups embraced World Book Day this year with many of the children sending in photographs of all the wonderful places they found to look at a book, from inside a tent to a park bench. Keep up the good work, bookworms!

*Charlotte Vallins*

### Balsham Picture House

The film for April, on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>, is the Oscar-nominated film MAESTRO (15); stars include Bradley Cooper and Carey Mulligan.

MAESTRO tells the complex love story of conductor-composer Leonard Bernstein and actress Felicia Montealegre Cohn Bernstein, a story that spans over 30 years-from the time they met in 1946 at a party and continuing through two engagements, a 25-year marriage, and three children.



The May film will be the 2023 and Oscar-awarded film THE HOLDOVERS (15). This will be shown on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> and is a good-natured comedic drama set in a 1970s USA private school with an unpopular teacher, a

rebellious student and recently bereaved school cook stuck in the school over the Christmas break and who form an unusual bond!

Doors open at 7 pm and films start at 7.30 pm.

Dave's bar will be open as usual before the film for refreshments!

*Dick Paden*

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### *The Meadow Primary School, Balsham*

The month ahead promises to be an exciting and bustling time for our school community! Our talented Year 3/4 students are diligently preparing for their highly anticipated production of Snow White, where they will showcase their acting skills and musical talents to captivate audiences. Meanwhile, we are practising for our Easter service at Balsham Church, where students will come together to reflect on the significance of the season and celebrate the spirit of renewal and hope. Additionally, our adventurous Year 5 students are gearing up for an unforgettable residential trip to How Hill, where they will embark on hands-on learning experiences amidst the beauty of nature. With so much to look forward to, it's bound to be a month brimming with creativity, spirituality, and unforgettable experiences for all our children!

In celebration of **World Book Day** on 7<sup>th</sup> March, our students embarked on an exciting literary journey diving into Mariajo Ilustrajo's captivating tale, 'Flooded'. Engaging their imaginations, KS1 students envisioned our school submerged underwater, brainstorming innovative solutions such as crafting goggles, constructing bridges, and inventing flotation devices. Meanwhile, KS2 students unleashed their

creativity by designing bespoke wellington boots and crafting poignant acrostic poems inspired by the themes of resilience and adaptation within the book.



It was a day filled with literary exploration and inventive thinking, showcasing the boundless possibilities ignited by the power of storytelling.



A spirited fundraising initiative for **Comic Relief** on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March spearheaded by our dedicated school council saw the children 'Break the Rules' for a day! Pupils were granted the exhilarating opportunity to defy convention by bending traditional school rules. From sipping squash in water bottles to indulging in tasty snacks at breaktime, and even ditching the uniform for fancy dress or own clothes, the day was a whirlwind of excitement and rebellion. With wild hairstyles and rule-breaking spirits in abundance, our school community united in support of a worthy cause. The event proved to be a resounding success, as we proudly raised over £250 for Comic Relief, demonstrating once again the immense generosity and goodwill of our families and students.

*Faye Facer, Assistant Headteacher*

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**World Book Week at LVC's Library**

At LVC we are lucky to have a thriving and popular library. Run by our amazing librarian, Mrs Hay, the library serves as a hub for our student community in a variety of different ways. Dawn has been our librarian for over six years now and works tirelessly to instil in our students the love of literacy and reading – the reason, she says, she became the librarian in the first place.

To commemorate World Book Day, we welcomed Mark Woodley, an ex-LVC student and published author, for a visit. Mark entertained students across all year groups on World Book Day with a book signing and informal chat over lunch followed by a year 8 talk on the struggles of writing and becoming a published author. Students were enthralled by a giant-sized lost hammer of Darkerden which features in Mark's first book.

The library is first a centre for learning and love of books. Students in year 7 use the space for a paired reading initiative before school, where some of our Year 10 students sit down and listen to them read and support them in being more confident readers. The Lexia literacy programme for Years 7 to 10 helps students improve their grammar, comprehension

techniques and ability to use language and new words. Homework club after school provides support and IT access for some of our students who may need to stay after the end of the school day.

The library is also very popular in the school's social times. In fact, it is so popular that the queue often reaches all the way down the corridor. Students can play chess, Warhammer and a variety of different games, as well as using the computers to help with their learning. Knit and Stitch on Thursdays provides an opportunity for students to talk and craft.



In the next few weeks, the library will host our infamous Harry Potter night for students in Year 7. Dressing up, games, Harry Potter crafts and a themed buffet make this night one the students always remember.

**Laura Heard**

**Linton Library News**

Come and visit Linton library this April for . . .

**Easter holiday fun activities for kids** – drop-in crafts, picture hunts and more.

Our **monthly talk** on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 - 3.30 pm, will be from the volunteer group FROG – Friends of the River Granta – whose aim is to protect and enhance the local River Granta. It's free but please book your place by contacting the library or email: [cambourne.referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:cambourne.referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**Ann King & Melanie Symonds (0345 045 5225,**  
[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library))



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### **Balsham WI**

At our meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March, we had a session on ‘Mindfulness’ by Mel Cunningham. Mel explained a little bit about mindfulness and how it could be used to help relieve stress. She then did some mindfulness tasks with the group – I have never heard it so quiet during a meeting! We tried eating a square of chocolate in a slow, mindful way by looking at it, then smelling it and nibbling it slowly while trying to work out what ingredient had been added to it. By doing this you are slowing down and thinking about one thing rather than the myriad of things that are usually going through our minds. I think we all felt quite serene at the end of her talk!



This was followed by our annual meeting when plans for the coming year were explained. We have plans for varied talks and events during the year, leading up to our Centenary celebrations in 2025.

Our next meeting, on 9<sup>th</sup> April, will be a social meeting with board games and chat as well as tea and cake!

*Debbie Mower*

### **West Wickham and District Gardening Club**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm –

‘Asian Woodland Plants’

Meetings are held at West Wickham village hall at 7.30 pm on the third Monday of every month. Annual subscriptions for 2023/24: £8 per person, or £2 for non-members per visit. Tea and coffee provided.

*Sally Collins* |( [wwdgc@westwickham.org](mailto:wwdgc@westwickham.org) )

### **Balsham Gardening Club**

The club met on 6<sup>th</sup> March, with Andrew Clark showing us how to make blue tit nest boxes, and suet block and simple fat ball feeders. He explained the importance of the 25 mm nest box hole to stop larger birds, and that the boxes should face north so they don’t overheat in the sun. We had a go at making the boxes and feeders ourselves or took them home to finish.

Harold Gawthorp gave us some gardening tips. Despite the record warm February, his advice was to wait for drier conditions. This winter’s rain will have washed nutrients from the soil, so plants will need careful feeding.

We’re planning a visit to RHS Hyde Hall near Chelmsford in May or June. Hyde Hall is well worth a visit at any time and known for its dry garden.

We’ll meet again on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion. We have a very interesting speaker lined up: master thatcher Chris Dodson, on the principles and practice of thatching. Guests will be welcome.

*Andy Mitchell*

### **1<sup>st</sup> Horseheath Brownies**

We have been very creative this term, making Mothering Sunday paper flowers, Easter bonnets and cards. We have also been designers, helping Girlguiding design the uniform from 2026. Girlguiding wanted every current member to have their say in what colour, logo design/size etc we wanted for our new uniform. We are all excited to see what they come up with.

Next term we have our Brownie holiday with Balsham Brownies to look forward to in May. It will be good to go back to the Jarman Centre for a ‘relaxing’ weekend.

In June we hope to meet up with some US Girl Scouts who will be touring the UK for three weeks. Plans are being formulated to have a ‘getting to know you’ afternoon with the US Girl Scouts, 1<sup>st</sup> Linton Guides and Horseheath Brownies. It will be great for all the girls to meet up and exchange ideas between the two countries.

*Pauline, Katie & Gemma*  
( [horseheathbrownies@gmail.com](mailto:horseheathbrownies@gmail.com) )

## ***Linton & District Historical Society***

The vision of Frank Fenner, born in Cambridge in 1811, and a tobacconist trading in Market Square in the mid 1800's, was to see dedicated sporting facilities in the city. This most interesting story was presented by Nigel Fenner, a descendant of this remarkable man. Surprisingly, Frank Fenner's only legacy is the University Cricket Ground being named after him.

Nigel started his talk by saying Frank actually trained as a teacher and went on to become a University Football Blue. 1848 saw students from Cambridge University write the first set of football rules, and today, a memorial stands on Parker's Piece to mark this event.

He was involved with football, boxing and athletics; it is said that Frank Fenner was the best cricket player of his time. Despite a somewhat challenging relationship between 'Town and Gown' he astonishingly brought together a cricket team selected with players from both sides.

His death in Bath in May 1896 aged 85 was reported in two short easily overlooked sentences, on someone who was an inspirational man and a pioneer in obtaining 'sport for all'. Frank Fenner was inspirational, and everyone attending, even if not interested in sport, enjoyed a well presented evening.

Our talk on 16<sup>th</sup> April will feature 'The Homes of William Morris' when our speaker will be Fiona Rose. As always our meetings start at 7.30 pm in Linton Village Hall, Coles Lane. Raffle and refreshments during the evening. All welcome; visitors £5.

For further details of the LDHS please email [ldhscambs@gmail.com](mailto:ldhscambs@gmail.com) or call 01223 893915 or 678835.

***Margaret Creek***

## ***Help for Ukraine***

Saffron Walden Rotary thanks all those who kindly donated food, clothing and household items and cash at our collection held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March at Great Abington School.

Residents from Abington and the surrounding villages responded so well to the third collection held in Abington that the parked UK Aid van was full by the end of the morning. Over £1,000 was also generously donated, which will buy four generators, desperately needed where no power supplies are available.

Organiser Rotarian Tony Collett, said "We are very appreciative of the support we receive which together with the ten collections we have held on Saffron Walden Common means that we are one of the major



donors to UK-Aid, the Felsted based charity that takes everything to distribution centres in Moldova and Ukraine for the benefit of Ukrainian refugees. This all starts with the kindness and generosity of local people – thank you."

***Tony Collett, Saffron Walden Rotary***

## ***Granta Medical Practices***

NHS UK will contact you direct if your NHS medical record suggests you may be eligible for a spring COVID-19 vaccine.

You may be offered a spring COVID-19 vaccine from April 2024 if you:-

- are aged 75 years old or over
- live in a care home for older adults
- are aged 6 months old or over and have a weakened immune system.

When available, there will be different ways to obtain your vaccine, including:

- booking online
- going to a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site
- through your care home
- via one of the community services.

If you go to a walk-in centre please remember to take your invitation letter with you.

As and when we receive further information about the spring vaccine we will let you know.

***Sandra East, Head of Patient Services***

**GRANTA** Medical Practices

APR	9.30 am	11.00 am	6.00 pm
7 <sup>th</sup>		<b>United Service with Holy Communion</b> – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	
14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Holy Communion</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – West Wickham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i>	<b>Morning Worship</b> – Balsham, <i>Hannah Threlfall</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – Hildersham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – Great Abington, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	<b>Evening Prayer</b> – West Wrating, <i>Alistair Collen</i>
21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Holy Communion</b> – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Alistair Collen</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i> <b>Morning Worship</b> - West Wickham, <i>Rhona McEune</i>	<b>Holy Communion</b> – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Alistair Collen</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – Little Abington, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	<b>Evening Prayer</b> – Hildersham, <i>Rhona McEune</i>
28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Teddy Bear Service</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> <b>Holy Communion</b> – West Wickham, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Rhona McEune</i> <b>Creative Church (10.00 am)</b> – Abington Institute, <i>Hannah Threlfall/Rosemary Mead</i>	<b>Holy Communion</b> – Balsham, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i> <b>Café Church</b> – Hildersham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	<b>Evening Prayer</b> – Little Abington, <i>Rhona McEune</i>

## DIARY

### APRIL 2024

Tues 2 Deadline, Peter & Ruth Lloyd Trust applications  
 Wed 3 Balsham Gardening Club  
 Sat 6 West Wrating Café  
 Balsham Picture House, ‘Maestro’  
 Tues 9 Balsham WI  
 Sat 13 Auction, Brinkley  
 Sun 14 Pub Quiz, The Chestnut Tree  
 Mon 15 West Wickham & District Gardening Club  
 Tues 16 Linton & District Historical Society  
 Wed 17 West Wrating Book Club  
 Thur 18 Third Thursday Lunch, The Chestnut Tree  
 Fri 19 Tea & Cakes, Weston Colville Reading Room  
 Sat 20 Bellingring Open Morning, Brinkley  
 Wed 24 Weston Colville ‘Pub Quiz’  
 Sat 27 Teddy Bear’s Sleepover, St Mary’s

### MAY 2024

Wed 1 Weston Colville Parish Council meeting  
 Sat 4 Balsham Picture House, ‘The Holdovers’  
 Sun 12 Oil Co-operative Ordering Deadline  
 Mon 13 West Wrating Parish Council meeting  
 Thur 23 Beer Festival begins, The Chestnut Tree

**Mobile Post Office:** Thursdays, Reading Room car park, Weston Colville, 12.30 - 1.30 pm

**Mobile library: fourth Thursday:** 25<sup>th</sup> April, 23<sup>rd</sup> May  
 High Street, West Wrating 11.10 - 11.50 am  
 Reading Room, Weston Green 12.00 - 12.35 am  
 Mill Hill, Weston Colville 12.40 - 1.05 pm

#### Revd Iain McColl

01223 890693, [mccoll.iain@gmail.com](mailto:mccoll.iain@gmail.com)

#### Revd Ben Brady

01223 344920, [revdbenbrady@btinternet.com](mailto:revdbenbrady@btinternet.com)

#### Mr Steven Wheeler, Licensed Lay Minister

01223 290396, [steven@juicyfruitsuk.com](mailto:steven@juicyfruitsuk.com)

#### Hannah Threlfall, Community Minister

07867 515914, [hthrelfall82@gmail.com](mailto:hthrelfall82@gmail.com)

#### Churchwardens:

St Mary’s – Ian Ashbridge (01223 291344)

Bob Coates (07785 361345)

St Andrew’s – Sebastian Bain (07736 198101)

**Church Administrator:** Caroline (Cazzy) Walshe,  
[7churches.seven@gmail.com](mailto:7churches.seven@gmail.com), 01223 891443

**Weston Colville Parish Clerk:** Jess Ashbridge,  
[clerk@westoncolville.org.uk](mailto:clerk@westoncolville.org.uk), 07779 277647

**West Wrating Parish Clerk:** Jenny Richards,  
[j.richards597@btinternet.com](mailto:j.richards597@btinternet.com), 01223 665260

**Community Warden:** Lucy Cameron,  
[Lucy.Cameron@AgeUKCAP.org.uk](mailto:Lucy.Cameron@AgeUKCAP.org.uk), 07436 102865

#### Black bins:

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> April,  
 Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> May

#### Blue & green bins:

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> April,  
 Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> May

#### Editor: Anne Bragg ([editor@challengemag.co.uk](mailto:editor@challengemag.co.uk))

Thank you for all your articles, news, etc. If these are sent by email, they are always acknowledged; if you don’t get a reply, your items haven’t been received, so please resend. Some contributions may have to be edited, to fit the space available, and are published at the discretion of the editor.

**Copy date for April issue:  
 Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March**