

Challenge

The Parish Newsletter of Weston Colville and West Wrating

The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

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West Wrating Café

The next café will be on Saturday 5th July, 10.30/noon in the village hall.

Do join us and support our fundraiser for MAGPAS. The idea is to 'Bring and Donate': bring along unwanted items that may be earmarked for the charity shop, and then people can make a donation for any items they would like. We're hoping for a good turnout for our new venture!

Our usual café will run with homemade cakes, freshly brewed coffee and teas. We hope to see you there.

Sherry & Jan

Tea & Cakes

The sun came out and the Reading Room was nice and cool for our June Tea & Cakes. We welcomed some new people, as well as our regulars – thank you for coming.



We hold our afternoon get-togethers once a month on the third Friday, so our next one will be on 18th July, 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Val & the Team

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Still Looking for a Year 7 Place for September?

We have some spaces available at Linton Village College.

We are a relatively small secondary school where we develop positive supportive relationships with students and their families. We offer a nurturing and inspiring learning environment in which everyone can thrive and achieve.

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Join West Wratting Parish Council


Help make a difference in your community!


There's a vacancy for a councillor on West Wratting parish council – and we're looking for someone who's passionate about village life and wants to help shape its future. Could that be you?


Parish councillors are the heart of local democracy, working to represent the views of residents, improve local services, and ensure West Wratting continues to thrive.



You'd be joining a friendly and committed team: Caughlin Ryder, John Harvey, Louise Chandler, Paul McKenna, Phil O'Donovan, and Simon Chandler.

 Whether you're already active in the community or looking for a new way to get involved, this is your opportunity to have your voice heard and to stand up for what matters most to West Wratting.

 Wondering what the role involves or how much time it takes? We've put together a helpful web page (<https://westwratting.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions-faq/>) answering common questions about being a parish councillor.

 Interested? Want to find out more? Contact our Clerk, Cameron Biggs, at clerk@westwratting.org.uk.

Be the voice of your village – become a parish councillor.

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Baby Sitting, odd-jobs, and car washing.

Competent 15-year-old, Charlie Hodson, is raising money for his LVC Challenge Trip

West Wratting based.

 £10/hour, £10/car  Call 07818033668 for info

West Wratting Village Hall

The curry night got off to a great start with a 45-minute set of traditional Indian music performed by Gomathy and her daughter. Following this we were treated to a delicious three course Indian meal. Thank you to everyone involved in making this such an enjoyable evening.

Thanks also to everyone who has signed up to the lottery. We held our first draw at the Saturday Café on 7th June. The winning numbers were: first prize, £25.60, number 26; second £19.20, number 12; third £6.40, number 30. If you would like to join the lottery please contact Jan at jan.davey5@btinternet.com

If you have ideas for talks, workshops, or organised events, and would like to help get them started, please do contact me.

The Management Committee is looking for new members and officers – our treasurer would still like to retire soon, as would others. The hall is yours to run – if you are interested please contact me or any committee member.

Martin Davey, Chair (penywaen1@gmail.com)



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West Wratting Book Club

Our book for June was 'Olive Kitteridge' by Elizabeth Strout, who was recently short-listed for the Women's Prize for Fiction for another of her books. (The prize was won by Yael van der Wouden's 'The Safekeep' which we recently read.)

This is a series of short stories set in a small town in Maine, USA. They are about or related to the eponymous character, Olive Kitteridge, to a greater or lesser degree. They are snapshots of her and other people's lives over several years, their interactions, and how they affect each other. Not all the stories have a proper ending, leaving some dissatisfied.

This book divided opinion. with some loving it while others disliked it. The latter described it as prosaic, insular, boring and tedious with all the characters portrayed in a bad light. Those who liked it did so, in one case, despite or perhaps because of the unlikeable characters. Themes included long marriages, ageing, death, relationships between the old and young (in particular, the acrimonious relationship between Olive and her son), as well as an exploration of nature and nurture and what people tell themselves as opposed to how others see them. One person felt the ending was

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KIDS TENNIS COACHING DAY

d'Abo Tennis Club, West Wratting

Friday 8th August, 10am-3pm

d'Abo Tennis Club are delighted to invite you to a free day of tennis lessons provided by Full Swing Tennis Coaching.

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10 yrs and under	12:15-1:15 PM
11-15 yrs	1:15-3:00 PM

Please register for the coaching day by emailing:
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For more information about d'Abo Tennis Club visit:
VISIT: WWW.WESTWRATTINGTENNIS.CO.UK

a little 'Hollywood' but others did not think this was so.

Scores varied between 4, 8 and 10 out of 10.

We will now be having our summer break and re-convene at The Chestnut Tree on Wednesday 17th September at 7.30 pm to review two books: 'Homegoing' by Yaa Gyasi and 'The Glass Maker' by Tracy Chevalier.

Linda Gorman (290653)

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Kingsway Solar Community Action

A huge thank you to everyone who joined our community walk on Sunday 8th June. Over 130 residents and volunteers came together to explore the West Wrating countryside as part of a national campaign drawing attention to the spread of industrial-scale solar farms, pylons, and battery storage developments in rural areas.

Afterwards, we gathered at West Wrating Village Hall for wildlife displays, refreshments, and a talk outlining the plans for Kingsway – what's proposed, why KSCA is opposing it, and how local people can get involved.

You can watch the video of the talk and listen to the audio of the Q&A by visiting the news page on the KSCA website (kingswayaction.org).

Watch out for future community events in Balsham, Weston Colville and West Wickham.

We want to hear your views – tell us how you think the proposed solar farm could affect your wellbeing, lifestyle, and connection to the local area. Your feedback will help shape our community response to the next stage of consultation.

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MP action – local MP Pippa Heylings recently met with the Project Manager, David Vernon, from Kingsway/Downing Renewables to raise concerns about poor community engagement, lack of transparency, battery fire risks and the need for proper consultation over potential community benefits. She has promised to share a full update soon, including with parish councils.

Step into nature – July's focus: Insects!

As part of our Step into Nature campaign, we're asking residents to look out for insects this month. Insects play a vital role in ecosystems – pollinating plants, breaking down waste, and providing food for birds and other wildlife.

Please record anything you spot, especially rare or protected species. You can log sightings online at *iRecord*. Visit the Buglife website to help with insect identification (<https://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs/identify-a-bug/>).

What you can do:

- Complete our community survey on the solar farm's impact on you.
- Sign the national petition to ban large-scale solar on farmland (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/703284>).
- Pledge your support for CPRE's rooftop solar campaign (<https://www.cpre.org.uk/rooftop-solar/>).
- Become a KSCA member to stay involved <https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/how-to-join-us/>
- Follow KSCA on Facebook for real-time updates.
- Donate via GoFundMe to support our work (<https://gofund.me/479e0bd8>).

Together, we can protect our countryside and make sure local voices are heard.

Ellen Collier

Pippa Heylings MP

Following the concerns that have been conveyed to me by constituents and the affected parish councils, I had a meeting with David Vernon of Kingsway Solar. I raised a number of key questions about their process so far in order to hold them to account for decisions





taken, and ascertain how they plan to move forward as a result. District Councillor Geoff Harvey also joined the meeting to represent local people who've raised concerns with him. I challenged Mr Vernon on the poor engagement with the community; lack of early and structured engagement with the local planning authority; and heavy-handed tactics with what I highlighted was inappropriate use of planning regulation to gain access to properties leaving some residents distressed and angry. Though Mr Vernon was confident in their approach despite my concerns, there was an acknowledgment that this could have been handled in a better way. I was pleased to hear from Mr Vernon that Kingsway plan to publish a summary of interim findings from the non-statutory consultation before the next stage of consultation begins. This will be an important opportunity to see the extent to which key issues raised are being considered. Mr Vernon agreed with me that the Statutory Consultation should not happen over the summer state school holidays and confirmed that residents will have time to participate when term begins. Exact dates are still to be published. I was reassured that fire service concerns are being fully considered and I will be supporting my colleagues, Charlotte Cane MP and Calum Miller MP, in their parliamentary work raising concerns on battery safety. I stressed to Mr Vernon that I will continue to push for any large-scale solar farm applications to be informed by a joined-up national approach through the proposed Land Use Framework and the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan. We need a system for ensuring appropriate land is selected for development, balancing competing demands for food production, nature, housing and energy infrastructure, rather than leaving it to a postcode lottery of available land. As

for potential community benefits, Mr Vernon informed me that Kingsway are currently developing their proposal for this as part of the next stage of consultation. He said this would involve, in his opinion, 'significant sums' for a community fund that would be allocated in consultation with the parish councils and local authorities. It remains to be seen whether the amounts being considered are proportionate and follow the best practice, such as the example that is set in Scotland. I appreciate the engagement of local people and will continue to hold Kingsway Solar to account.

Pippa Heylings MP

Devana Rewilding Project

Last September, there was a presentation of the Devana Rewilding Project in West Wickham, funded by an investment company called Ground Control, which is transforming a farm estate into a wildlife reserve – which all appears to be a very beneficial project. What was not quite clear from the presentation was how it would, as they said, show that nature recovery can generate sustainable revenue. More light is shed on this by googling 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG), which is a requirement for major development projects such as Kingsway Solar. One of the top hits is for 'Ground Control . . . Buy BNG Units . . . ' and their website immediately flags up Devana as "one of the first Habitat Banks in England to appear on the National Biodiversity Net Gain Sites Register . . .". So, this rewilding project is to be paid for, at least in part, by developers like Kingsway Solar so as to meet their legal obligation to provide BNG somewhere, even if they destroy the existing wildlife habitat around our villages.

John Rogers

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From the Rectory

At the time of writing, we are really looking forward to our curate Hannah Threlfall's ordination as a priest on 28th June at Ely Cathedral! As with her ordination to be a deacon last summer, this will be a beautiful service of worship, solemn promises and joy. Bishop Dagmar will ordain Hannah, along with other curates around the diocese, as a priest who will, as it says in this special order of service: 'lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel', including presiding at Holy Communion services, baptisms and marriages.

I'm so grateful we have this opportunity to come together at the cathedral to witness Hannah's ordination and to give thanks for the ministry of curates from around the Ely diocese as they serve in Christ's name in their parishes and the wider world. Hannah has already been involved in our parishes in so many ways: leading morning worship, Taizé services and creative church, taking school assemblies, making pastoral visits, to name but a few, and I'm so glad her ministry amongst us will continue

to grow. Word has it that, as well as taking upcoming weddings and baptisms, she also has a pet service in Balsham church planned, so there is much to look forward to!

Speaking of our wonderful ministry team, I'm delighted to confirm that Alastair France, who has been on placement with us since last autumn, has been accepted on to an ordination training pathway for experienced lay leaders in the Church of England. After initial interviews, candidates like Alastair embark on a journey that may potentially take them to



ordination in two years. We hope and pray we can support Alastair in this journey and, if you see him around, please feel free to ask how he is getting on and offer him your encouragement.

Finally, as some may know, I have been granted study leave from the beginning of August until the beginning of November, which will involve some traveling around including interviewing Anglican ministers in different parts of the country. Whilst I am on study leave, Revd Hannah, Revd Kathy and the rest of our ministry team will continue to lead a rich variety of worship, offer pastoral support and look after our parishes, and please feel free to contact them on any matter.

Revd Iain McColl

Rosemary Westley

Rosemary, who lived in Weston Colville for practically all of her long life, sadly died on Wednesday 18th June.

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Control of Dogs

During a recent meeting of the parish council with district and county councillors and the county council flood risk team on Common Road near the Stour River, one of the parish councillors was severely scratched down the whole of their leg by a poorly-controlled dog which was on a lead. The owner seemed oblivious of the harm caused. The councillor in question had to go to Linton surgery to get the cuts checked out, due to the risk of infection. If the owner had had the dog under better control the whole incident could have been avoided.

It is the responsibility of all dog owners to keep their pets under control and to stop them jumping up on people. I understand that pets like to be affectionate but they still need to be controlled.

The incident was completely unacceptable and as a result I feel it necessary to remind dog owners of the need to control their pets at all times.

Ray Vidler, Chair, Weston Colville Parish Council

Balsham WI

The June meeting took us back to the 1970s – the age of disco, with flashing disco lights, mirror ball and music from 45 rpm vinyl records played on a Bush record player to greet us. The meeting opened with greetings to three of our current members who started with Balsham WI in the 1970s; they were each awarded a Yorkie Bar which first appeared in the shops during this decade.

The 1970s was the time of the Vietnam War, the Troubles in Ireland, and much industrial unrest in the country with many strikes and walkouts. We had decimalisation, joining the EC, and Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. Balsham WI was very involved in community events at the time, entering floats into the



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village carnival and purchasing a new village sign. The quiz on prices of household goods in the 1970s was very interesting and I don't think many of us got any of them right.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 8th July, when the theme will be the 1980s.

We are a friendly group, and new members are always welcome. Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion, Balsham. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining us – balshamwi@gmail.com – or send a message on Facebook, @Balsham WI

SAVE THE DATE: on Saturday 16th August we are holding an afternoon tea for past and present members at the Church Institute in celebration of our centenary this year.

Debbie Mower

Delivery Help Needed

One of the wonderful volunteers who delivers Challenge to Weston Colville households will be unable to do so from the autumn, so it would be very useful to find another helpful person. Please contact me for details.

Anne Bragg (editor@challengemag.co.uk)



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What's On	Directory	Parish Council
Parish History	Local Sports	Village Hall Events
Church News	Parish Matters	Village Calendar

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

Balsham Singers

The concert on 17th May, celebrating our 30th anniversary year, was well received by a capacity audience.

The choir was joined by a small chamber ensemble of talented local musicians, which enhanced the performance. We sang pieces by Mozart, Haydn, and Handel, alongside contemporary composers: Goodall, Rutter, and Groban, to name a few. The programme included an arrangement of Gershwin's 'Summertime' arranged for Balsham Singers in 1996 by our very first musical director Jonathan Cook.

In her address our present chairman Jean Mannion dedicated the concert to the choir's founder Julian Robinson, who had sadly passed away just a few weeks previously.

If you are interested in joining our choir we always welcome new members. We meet in Balsham Sports Pavilion on Thursdays at 7.30pm. The first rehearsal of the new season, for our Christmas concert (on 13th December) will be on 11th September. If you have any questions please contact our MD John Clenaghan (john.clenaghan@sky.com).

Jo Stinton

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West Wickham & District Gardening Club

West Wickham Big Garden Party is on 5th July in West Wickham Village Hall, 12 –5 pm. Visit our stall for helpful advice, quizzes, and edible flowers!

Inspired to take some photographs when you are out and about? This year's competition categories are: Frozen, Light and Dark, Terrific Trees. Contact us on photo@westwickham.org for more details.

Sally Collins (wwdgc@westwickham.org)

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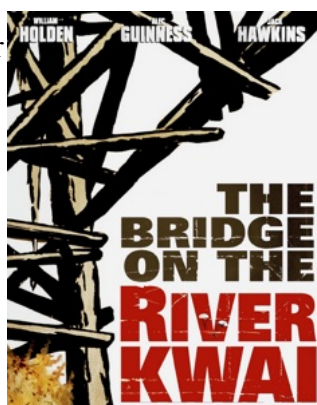


City
Guilds



Balsham Picture House

Saturday July 5th – THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI (PG). During WWII, allied POWs in a Japanese internment camp are ordered to build a bridge to accommodate the Burma-Siam railway. Their instinct is to sabotage the bridge, but under the leadership of Colonel Nicholson they're persuaded the bridge should be built to help morale, spirit. At first, the prisoners admire Nicholson when he bravely endures torture rather than compromise his principles for the benefit of Japanese Commandant Colonel Saito, but soon they realise it's a monument to Nicholson himself, as well as a form of collaboration with the enemy. Award winning film starring William Holden, Alec Guinness and Jack Hawkins.



Normal start time of doors open at 7 pm and film at 7.30 pm in the Balsham Church Institute, Church Lane, Balsham. Dave's bar will be open as usual before the film for refreshments.

The film evening on July 5th concludes the Balsham VE/VJ big lunch day to commemorate 80 years since the ceasing of hostilities in WWII. Balsham had a number of servicemen imprisoned in the Far East and so VJ day was a far more significant event than VE Day.

There will be a community picnic lunch with historical ephemera and presentations, teas, ice creams, steam trains and a giant slide plus other activities for all ages, to be held in the church institute and pavilion and recreation ground.

Dick Paden

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Saturday 5 July

12pm - 5pm

West Wickham Village Hall

ALL WELCOME!

The Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth

School Holiday Activities with Prestige Sports every weekday in the school holidays from 21st July through until 29th August. Visit their website (<https://www.prestigesportsdevelopment.com>) to book your children on to this.

Summer Show, Sunday 6th July. If you have a Vintage/Classic car or motorbike, please enter it into the show.

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The Meadow Primary School, Balsham

With sunshine warming our playgrounds and the buzz of outdoor fun in the air, it's been a wonderful time for exploration and collaboration – both in nature and within our school community.

Embracing the Outdoors with OPAL – one of the most exciting initiatives at our school has just begun: the launch of our OPAL journey (Outdoor Play and Learning). This is something we're truly passionate about. We want to give every child the freedom to be their authentic selves during playtime – choosing who to play with, what to play, and how to express their creativity and curiosity. We believe that these opportunities for free, unstructured outdoor play foster strong friendships, improve behaviour in the classroom, and ultimately help each child become the best version of themselves.

In a world dominated by screens and technology, encouraging imaginative outdoor play is a positive and refreshing step for our young people. To support this vision, we are developing our outdoor play areas with new resources and activities. Thanks to a generous grant from Wadlow Wind Farm through our PTA – special thanks to Kara Rann – every child will soon have access to a fantastic new sandpit!

Alongside this, we are creating exciting spaces such as digging pits, mud kitchens, dress-up areas, and plenty of room for children to explore and play with toys.

We're opening up the possibilities and hoping nothing will be off-limits – except the limits of their own imaginations! To help us make this vision a reality, we're asking for kind donations of items of all sorts. Anything such as pots and pans, small world toys (babies, prams, cars, dinosaurs), sandpit toys, building blocks, and more. If you can help, please drop off

donations at the school office or get in touch at office@meadowprimary.org.

Sports Day Triumphs – earlier this month, our sports day was a fantastic success. The children showed incredible determination, resilience, and team spirit as they competed in a range of activities, from individual sprints to thrilling relay races, and fun group challenges like egg-and-spoon races, sack races, and the long jump. It was wonderful to see everyone giving their best and cheering each other on.

Year 6 Residential Adventure – our Year 6 pupils recently returned from an unforgettable residential trip to Norfolk Lakes, where they joined forces with children from Wimbish Primary School. The



adventure-packed days were filled with exciting activities



including kayaking, high ropes, archery, and crate stacking! This unique experience offered the children a chance to challenge themselves, build confidence, and create lasting memories –

ones we're sure they will treasure forever.

Faye Facer, Assistant Headteacher

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Linton Village College

Enrichment is a core value at Linton Village College. Every June we collapse the timetable for our Enrichment Week. This has been a long-standing fixture in Linton Village College's calendar to enable students to learn outside the classroom.



Our ambition is for all students to experience a weeklong residential in Year 9, a week's work experience in Year 10, and a range of day trips and events in Years 7 and 8. These opportunities enable students to learn in a hands-on way, push themselves out of their comfort zones, and build relationships and confidence.

This summer our residential trips included Iceland, Paris, Scotland and the Peak District. Our first trip to Iceland was dubbed 'Fire and Ice'. It lived up to its name with trips to volcanoes, hot springs and glaciers on the itinerary. Paris provided both a variety of cultural sightseeing and a day at Euro Disney. The Scotland and Peak District trips afforded our Year 9s a more physical set of activities such as bouldering, ridge scrambling, water sports, bushcraft, and abseiling, to name but a few.



Years 7 and 8 enjoyed trips to Chessington, Colchester Zoo, Audley End, and Milton Country Park for water sports. Our in-house provision included a 'Cuban Day', a 'CSI* Day', archery, axe throwing and rock climbing.

We also hosted a virtual work experience. This included a day of physical activities led by the Army, online learning, and the chance to develop a range of life skills.

After an action-packed week, the planning for Enrichment Week 2026 commences!

Laura Heard

* *Crime Scene Investigation*



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JULY	9.30 am	11.00 am	6.00 pm
6 th		United Service with Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Revd Iain McColl</i>	
13 th	Holy Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop / Alistair France</i> Morning Worship – West Wrating, <i>Alistair Collen</i>	Morning Worship & Baptism – Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i> Morning Worship – Great Abington, <i>Alistair Collen</i> Holy Communion (BCP) – Hildersham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop / Alistair France</i>	Taizé service – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>
20 th	Holy Communion – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> Morning Worship – West Wickham, <i>Alistair Collen</i> Creative Church (10.00 am) – Abington Hub, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>	Morning Worship – Balsham, <i>Alistair Collen</i>	Taizé service – Hildersham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Steven Wheeler</i>
27 th	Holy Communion – West Wrating, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i> Morning Worship – West Wickham, <i>Steven Wheeler</i>	Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i> Holy Communion – Little Abington, <i>Revd Jane Butler</i> Café Church – Hildersham, <i>Steven Wheeler</i>	

Details of all our services can also be found on the website: www.grantavale.org.uk

Regular Midweek Services –

Every Tuesday at Hildersham, 7.00 pm,
Silent Space followed by **Compline**
Every Friday at Weston Colville, 8.45 am,
Morning Prayer

Revd Iain McColl

01223 890693, mccoll.iain@gmail.com

Revd Hannah Threlfall, Community Minister

01223 481090, RevThrelfall24@outlook.com

Mr Steven Wheeler, Licensed Lay Minister

01223 290396, stevenwheeler406@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, 01223 891443

Weston Colville Parish Clerk: Jess Ashbridge,
clerk@westoncolville.org.uk, 07779 277647

West Wrating Parish Clerk: Cameron Biggs,
clerk.westwratingparishcouncil@gmail.com

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

Mobile library: fourth Thursday:

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

Editor: Anne Bragg (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 August issue:

Sunday 20th July

DIARY

JULY 2025

Sat 5 West Wrating Café
Terrier & Dog Racing, Thurlow
West Wickham Big Garden Party
Balsham VE / VJ Big Lunch Day
Balsham Picture House, 'The Bridge on the River Kwai'

Sun 6 Summer Show, Ellesmere Centre

Tues 8 Balsham WI

Thur 17 Lunch Club, The Chestnut Tree

Fri 18 Tea & Cakes, Reading Room

Sat 26 West Wrating Engagement Party, 5 - 11.30 pm

AUGUST 2025

Fri 8 Tennis Coaching, West Wrating

Sat 16 Balsham WI Tea Party

Thur 21 'Pride & Prejudice', St Mary's

Black bins:

Wednesday 9th & 23rd July,
Wednesday 6th & 20th August

Green & blue bins:

Wednesday 2nd, 16th & 30th July,
Wednesday 13th & 27th August