

Challenge

The Parish Newsletter of Weston Colville and West Wratting

The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

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West Wratting Café

Thanks to everyone who came and supported our Café Christmas. The stallholders had a great morning and everyone enjoyed the festive refreshments.

The next café will be on Saturday 3rd January, 10.30 until noon in the village hall. Everyone welcome!

A big, big thank you to our volunteer helpers – without your support the café couldn't happen. We look forward to another successful year.

Sherry & Jan

Tea & Cakes

Thank you to everyone for coming along for our Christmas Tea & Cakes, and a big thank you for your generous donations to the Arthur Rank Hospice.

I will be able to update you on how much we have raised, including adding Gift Aid, at our New Year's Tea & Cakes on Friday 16th January in the Reading Room, 3.30 - 5.00pm as usual.

We look forward to catching up again soon.

Val & the Team

Save the Date!

Tim Cockerill has kindly agreed to give a talk about some aspects of the history of St Mary's Church and the village of Weston Colville at 6.30 pm on Saturday 28th February in the church.

It promises to be really interesting. More details and a reminder will be available in the February edition of *Challenge*.

Gabrielle Cliff Hodges



West Wratting Book Club

We will next meet at The Chestnut Tree on Wednesday 14th January at 7.30 pm to review the seasonal read of 'The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe' by C S Lewis.

Linda Gorman (290653)

West Wratting Village Hall

Charity Number 273557

The Village Hall AGM was held on Tuesday 9th December, where the annual report was presented to all those present, reviewed and accepted. All the previous trustees stood for re-election along with a new volunteer who has joined as a trustee and taken on the role as Honorary Treasurer.

The functions group is planning the following for next year: Bingo towards the end of February, a Beetle Drive, Quiz Night, Horse Racing Night, guest speakers, another Bingo later in the year, and possibly Harvest Supper and Wine Tasting. Look out for details in *Challenge* and on our local Facebook pages.

The December lottery draw winners were first: number 31, second: number 30 and third: number 9. Please contact Jan at jan.davey5@btinternet.com if you would like to join.

Martin Davey, Chair (penywaen1@gmail.com)



Candlemas – Sunday, 1st February, 6 pm

St Mary's Church in Weston Colville has taken to celebrating Candlemas in recent years. In the darker moments of winter, it's great to bring joy and light into the world!

Join us for a short informal service followed by refreshments. Light a candle and take it home!

Bob Coates

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Parish Matters

If, like me, you begin to get a bit fed up with sometimes hardly seeing the daylight, the feast of the Epiphany, marked on 6th January, is one of our great festivals of light – and a reminder that the days are starting to get longer again. It has long been associated in the West with the arrival of three ‘wise men’ – the magi – in Bethlehem. It’s a story that only the gospel writer Matthew tells.

Epiphany, though, originally commemorated Jesus’ baptism, the occasion on which he miraculously turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana and the presentation of Jesus at the temple. The visit of the magi was in fact a later addition to the celebration but it’s funny how things become tradition very quickly.

Over time, these events became separated out and, I might say, their meaning became a little diminished as a result. That’s a pity as they are all bright, focussed moments that proclaim to us: God is here – ‘Emmanuel’. The stories though are still read in services during our epiphany season, through to very early February. By that time my dog will hopefully be getting two walks in daylight per day.

The word ‘epiphany’ comes from a Greek word meaning ‘manifestation’ – or an appearance, a coming, a revelation. These events are manifestations of God.

As we mark the feast of the Epiphany, perhaps we might reflect on a couple of things. First, that the magi ‘from the East’ were Gentiles. They were not part of the Jewish tradition into which Jesus was born. So even here, at this very early stage in the story of Jesus, we are given to understand that God’s love reaches beyond traditional boundaries. It reaches to



people who are not part of our own community. Secondly, if our understanding of Epiphany includes not only the conclusion of the wise men’s long trek to a stable in Bethlehem but also the baptism of Jesus and his first miracle at Cana, then perhaps we are reminded that Epiphany is not the end of a journey; it’s only the beginning.

Alastair France

West Wrattling Village Hall Lottery

A huge thank you to everyone who has joined the lottery. The funds raised have gone towards improving the fabric of our village hall.

It would be great to increase our membership. Registration packs will be available at the Saturday café on 3rd January and 7th February, or contact me to join.

Jan Davey (07808 625495, Jan.davey5@btinternet.com)

Scam and Fraud Prevention

Nigel Sutton, Fraud and Cyber Security Adviser with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, has agreed to join us at the soup lunch on Wednesday 28th January to talk about scam prevention and online safety. Even if you’re not a regular attendee at soup lunches, you would be more than welcome to join the session as this topic affects most of us and there is always something to learn.

Bob Coates



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Kingsway Solar Community Action

As we welcome the new year, many of you are asking: “Is there anything else we can do?”

You’ve written letters, attended meetings, responded to each consultation, and shared your concerns widely. Thank you – your collective effort continues to make a real impact.

While the formal process is in a quieter phase, a great deal is happening behind the scenes. KSCA is now working closely with others through a newly-formed legal steering committee to review options for legal representation and ensure the community’s concerns are strongly and expertly presented as we move into the next stages of the NSIP process.

We’re also developing our public relations plan and setting out the next steps of the campaign – so please keep an eye out for further updates.

Where we are in the NSIP process – we are still in the pre-application stage, and we hope Kingsway are actively considering the letters, feedback, and concerns the community has raised. The next key milestone is expected around March 2026, when Kingsway may submit its planning application. After that, residents will be able to register as Interested Parties, take part in the Examination and submit evidence. The final stages carry no active community role, though judicial review may be considered.

KSCA needs a new communications lead – with Roz relocating to Wales, we are now looking for someone local to help keep our community informed and engaged throughout the next stages of the campaign.

Ideally that person will be:

- Enthusiastic and community-minded



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- Comfortable coordinating a small comms subcommittee
- Willing to sit on the KSCA main committee
- Happy to support local outreach – social posts, press, leaflets and updates.

You wouldn’t be doing this alone. We already have a friendly team of volunteers and plenty of templates and materials ready to use. If you enjoy generating ideas, pitching in, and helping keep neighbours up to date, we’d love to hear from you. If you’re curious and would like to explore the role further, please get in touch by email or speak to one of the committee.

Step into Nature campaign continues – we encourage everyone to keep recording what you see and hear on your walks – birds, mammals, insects, and plants. These observations are especially valuable in highlighting gaps or deficiencies in the surveys carried out by Kingsway, particularly in areas where partial or no surveys have been undertaken, such as along the proposed grid connection corridor. Every record helps, so please keep observing and keep noting what you find on *iRecord*.

Useful links:

- Join KSCA: kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/how-to-join-us
- Request a sticker: hello@kingswayaction.org
- Support our campaign: gofund.me/no-to-kingsway-solar-farm
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Kathy Day



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New application packs available at
the Saturday Café on 3rd Jan/7th
Feb 2026

Prefer to register directly? Contact us:
Jan Davey - jan.davey5@btinternet.com | 07808 725495
Doug Clarke - dougatgalewood@hotmail.com | 07818 400723

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Balsham WI

At the end of our centenary year our December meeting gave all members a chance to complete a keepsake Christmas decoration of an acrylic bauble engraved with 'Balsham WI 1925-2025' while drinking mulled wine. We then cut our anniversary



cake which had been made and decorated by two members (one a member for 55 years). After this was a compilation slide show of all the presentations given during this year, while eating our festive buffet and remembering a good year.

Our next meeting will be on 13th January, when our speaker will be Charli Bitten telling us about 'Tropic Skincare', with the chance to buy some products.

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, @BalshamWI

Debbie Mower (balshamwi@gmail.com)



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Balsham Picture House

Our January film, on Saturday 10th January, will be the comedy **THE PENGUIN LESSONS (12)**, based on a true story – a disillusioned Englishman (Steve Coogan) goes to work in a school in a divided Argentina in 1976 and finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach.



Doors open at 7 pm and film at 7.30. Dave's bar will be open as usual before the film for refreshments.

Dick Paden

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Balsham Jigsaw Library

There is now some new stock (around 60 jigsaws) of 1,000 piece puzzles. However there are very few jigsaws of 500 pieces or fewer. Anyone is welcome to come to the garage at Nine Chimney House to look at or take away jigsaws.

Joanna Sanders (sanderschimneys@uwclub.net)

Ghost Stories by Candlelight

There will be an evening of ghost stories in Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham, on Saturday 24th January at 7.30 pm, read by David Hart and Steve Murray from the Outspoken Theatre Company.

Steve and David are familiar faces to Hildersham, having performed in the Shakespeare plays in The Old School Woods at Hildersham Church.

Tickets, price to include refreshments, are £10, available at the door or from: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ghost-stories-by-candlelight-tickets-1966127522346?aff=oddtcreator>

Athene Hunt (huntcam2015@gmail.com)

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The Meadow Primary School, Balsham

December has been a wonderfully busy and joy-filled month at The Meadow, with our children experiencing a wide range of exciting opportunities that have truly brought the community together.

A Magical Nativity – our Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils have worked incredibly hard practising and performing their nativity this year. The children dazzled us with their singing, dancing and acting, and we could not be prouder of our youngest members of the school. Their confidence, teamwork and enthusiasm shone through in every performance.

Festive Celebrations Across the School – the festive spirit continued to build as the whole school took part in our annual Santa Dash—complete with colourful Christmas jumpers and big smiles all round. We also enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner and held our Key Stage Christmas parties, helping everyone to feel a strong sense of belonging and togetherness as we finished the term.

OPAL – alongside the festivities, we are continuing to make great strides on our OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) journey. We recently welcomed visitors who came to see the impact OPAL is having on our children's playtimes, and we were delighted to share



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the creativity, independence and joy that this approach is fostering. The children are thriving with the new opportunities: from imaginative play in the mud kitchen, to exploring small-world setups with train tracks, dinosaurs and playdough, to having the freedom to be inventive with a wide range of open-ended resources. Their play is richer, more collaborative, and wonderfully full of ideas.

As we continue to develop OPAL after Christmas, we would be grateful for any donations of items that can enhance the children's play. Small-world toys, chalk, creative materials, playdough and accessories, or household items such as pots, pans, spoons and bowls would all be very gratefully received.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone in our community a very happy New Year. Thank you for your continued support—it makes such a difference to the experiences and opportunities we are able to offer our children.

Faye Facer, Assistant Headteacher

WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY CLUB

Monday 12th January

7.30 pm in West Wickham Village Hall

A return visit by **Mathew Morris** to talk on

RICHARD III: *Bloody will be Thine End*
**Reconstructing the life & death of
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Linton Village College

Music is an important part of life at Linton Village College. It is central to our curriculum and gives students opportunities to learn, perform and be creative. Led by Mrs Juckes, the music department is a busy and welcoming space, with students often visiting outside lessons.

Music at LVC offers a wide range of opportunities beyond classroom learning or GCSE courses. Students can join ensembles such as Jazz Band, orchestras and choirs to perform together, including 'Linton Voices', led by Mrs Brown. Lunchtimes are active, with open sessions like 'Jam Club' for anyone who wants to play. In addition, nine professional musicians provide one-to-one tuition, helping students develop their skills and confidence as part of our peripatetic music team.

Students have also been involved in events beyond the classroom. Our Jazz Band performed alongside other



Village College musicians for the School Big Band Concert as part of the Cambridge Jazz Festival in November. 120 students took part in our Carol Concert at The Church of the Holy Trinity, Balsham, last month. It was a great community occasion attended by parents, governors and former staff.



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Another highlight was a trip for 40 students to watch the world-famous King's College Choir rehearse for their carol concert, which is seen by millions on TV on Christmas Eve.



Music at LVC is about more than lessons – it is about experiences, confidence and community. We are proud of what our students achieve and look forward to more opportunities in the year ahead.

Laura Heard

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West Wickham & District Gardening Club

With bright January skies and seeds to be sown (broad beans, sweet peas and chillies are just some that can be planted this month), there is so much for gardeners to look forward to in the New Year.



The club offers a welcoming atmosphere with a range of ages and experience. As well as monthly talks on a wide range of subjects from self-sufficiency to wasps, we also hold our incredibly popular Plant Sale in June and a Gardening Fair in September. One summer outing this year will be to RHS Wisley.

Dr Neil Dickinson will be our first speaker of 2026, talking on the subject of 'Japanese Gardens: What, Why, How?' on Monday 19th January in West Wickham Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Membership for 2025/26 is £8 (with £2 for non-members at talks) and runs from October to October, with new members welcome to join throughout the year. Membership also brings with it discounts at local suppliers and half-price entry to RHS gardens.

Please contact me for further information about the club.

Sally Collins (wwdgc@westwickham.org)

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LINTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2026



**We welcome back Bryan Thurlow who will give us
an insight into the history of Borley Rectory named
as 'The most haunted house in England'**

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Irish Dancing for beginners – starts Wednesday
7th January, 4.30 - 5.30 pm. Contact Sam Speed
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in Wisbech, and in patients' own homes via the Arthur Rank Community Team. It will cost over £14 million to run our services in 2025/26. With the help of our community, and schemes like the Christmas Tree Recycling, we can continue to provide our outstanding care free of charge to patients and their families.

We need drivers with vans (your own or hired), crew mates and people to help at the various drop-off points in and around Cambridge.

If you'd like to find out more, please contact us on christmastrees@arhc.org.uk or call us on 01223 675888.

We look forward to collecting your tree, and thank you for your support.

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Christmas Tree Recycling

This January save yourself the stress after the festivities and let our wonderful volunteers come and collect your tree for you, in return for a donation to Arthur Rank Hospice Charity.

The Arthur Rank Hospice Charity has been operating a Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme for ten years, and in this time over £400,000 has been raised.

We care for over 3,800 patients each year at our hospice in Cambridgeshire, the Alan Hudson Centre

www.westwratting.org.uk

for information on:

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.

Linton Library

Come in for cosy reads on dark days. You'll always find a warm and friendly welcome here. Relax with a jigsaw puzzle, find a new author, or use our free Wi-Fi.

Crime writer **Alison Stockham** will be visiting on Wednesday 21st January from 2 until 3.30 pm.- Alison will describe how she plots her gripping psychological thrillers, and introduce her latest novel. Tickets are £3; book in the library or contact cambourne.referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

2026 is the National Year of Reading

(www.goallin.org.uk) and we want to encourage everyone to get into reading! Book groups are a great way to make new friends, discover new different authors and titles, and get more enjoyment from reading. Two groups meet at Linton Library every third Friday, and the morning group would love to welcome new members.

Daylight Readers: our book groups will meet on Friday 16th January, one at 10.30 am and the other at 2.30 pm.

Rhythm & Rhyme: Tuesday mornings 10.30 - 11 am for 0 - 4 years (term time only), followed by Duplo. We would love to see you and your little ones there!

Knit and Natter: every Tuesday, 2 - 4 pm. Bring along any craft project you're working on.

IT Drop In: every Wednesday 5 - 7 pm, knowledgeable volunteers are here to offer help with Information Technology.

Games Afternoon: weekly, Thursday 2 - 4 pm. Come and meet new people; board and card games are provided, or bring your favourites to share.

Lego/Duplo: Fridays 10 - 11 am, every 1st, 2nd and 4th Friday. Come along and entertain your 0 - 4 year old.

Do you know someone who uses a walking aid? As the paths become slippery, please spread the word that the library can supply **free ferrules** (rubber feet) for walking aids to keep them in safe condition. Just ask library staff.

Opening hours: Tuesday 10 am - 5 pm; Wednesday 4 - 7 pm; Thursday 2 - 5 pm; Friday 10 am - 5 pm; Saturday 10 am - 1 pm.

Vicky Anandraj & Ann King
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Join the Adventure

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Whether you can give an hour a week or a few days a month, you'll make a real difference, supporting young people to:

- Build confidence and resilience
- Learn new skills and independence
- Enjoy outdoor adventures and teamwork.

No previous experience? No problem! We provide full training, support and a welcoming community.

What you'll gain:

- A sense of achievement and purpose
- Leadership and teamwork experience
- Lasting memories (and plenty of campfire stories).

Interested? Please contact our Chair, David Weir (chair@balshamscouts.org.uk) or Juliet Bevan (juliet.bevan@balshamscouts.org.uk)



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JAN	9.30 am	11.00 am	6.00 pm
4 th		United Service with Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Michael Wilcockson</i>	
11 th	Holy Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Holy Communion – West Wrating, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>	Plough Sunday Service – Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i> Holy Communion – Great Abington, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> Café Church – Hildersham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	Taizé service – Weston Colville, <i>Steven Wheeler</i>
18 th	Holy Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop / Alistair Collen</i> Holy Communion – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Alistair Collen</i> Holy Communion – Little Abington, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	Taizé service – Hildersham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>
25 th	Holy Communion – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Morning Worship – West Wickham, <i>Steven Wheeler</i> Creative Church – Abington Hub, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Rosemary Mead</i>	Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Holy Communion (BCP) – Hildersham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>	Evening Prayer (4.00 pm) – Little Abington, <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 Thursday at Balsham, 9.30 am,
Holy Communion (said service)
Every Friday at Weston Colville, 8.45 am,
Morning Prayer

Revd Iain McColl, 01223 890693,
mccoll.iain@gmail.com

Revd Michael Wilcockson, Rural Dean
associate.priest@stmaryslinton.org.uk

Revd Hannah Threlfall, Community Minister
01223 481090, RevThrelfall24@outlook.com

Mr Steven Wheeler, Licensed Lay Minister
01223 290396, stevenwheeler406@gmail.com

DIARY

JANUARY 2026

Sat 3 Saturday Café, West Wrating Village Hall
Mon 5 Weston Colville Parish Council meeting
Sat 10 Balsham Picture House, 'The Penguin Lessons'
Mon 12 West Wickham & District Local History Club
Tues 13 Balsham WI
Wed 14 West Wrating Book Club, The Chestnut Tree
Thurs 15 Lunch Club, The Chestnut Tree
Fri 16 Tea & Cakes, Weston Colville Reading Room
Mon 19 West Wickham & District Gardening Club
Tues 20 Linton & District Historical Society
Sat 24 Ghost Stories by Candlelight, Hildersham
Wed 28 Scam & Fraud Prevention Talk, Reading Room
Wed 28 - Sat 31 Ellesmere Devils' Pantomime
Sat 31 Lower Wood Working Party

FEBRUARY 2026

Sun 1 Candlemas, St Mary's, Weston Colville
Fri 6 Rose Pruning Workshop, Westley Waterless
Mon 12 West Wrating Parish Council meeting
Sat 28 Talk on St Mary's Church and Weston Colville

Black bins: Wednesday 7th & 21st January,
Wednesday 4th & 18th February

Blue bins: Wednesday 14th & 28th January,
Wednesday 11th & 25th February

Green bins: Wednesday 14th January,
Wednesday 11th February

Churchwardens:

St Mary's – Ian Ashbridge (01223 291344)
Bob Coates (07785 361345)

St Andrew's (Secretary) Simon Thorley (01223 290888)

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@westwrating.org.uk

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 February issue:
Tuesday 20th January