

December 2025



# Challenge



The Parish Newsletter of Weston Colville and West Wrating

The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

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## Great Expectations

**Soul Space @ St Mary's  
WESTON COLVILLE**

**6th December, 7pm**

**Tickets: [thisismytheatre.com](http://thisismytheatre.com)  
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## Christingle

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Wrating  
Church**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 4-5 pm**

**Children – come at 3.45 to make  
your own Christingle**

**Mulled Wine Tea Cakes**

John and Scilla Harvey



  
Kate

  
Christmas  
Café Studio

  
West Wrating  
Village Hall

  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>  
December  
10.30 - 13.30

  
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soup and  
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Karen

  
Sally



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### ***This Is My Theatre – Great Expectations***

This festive season, experience the timeless tale of 'Great Expectations' - a heartwarming, magical stage adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved classic.

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Tickets available from: <https://www.ticktattailor.com/events/cuemarketing/1836852>

*Jane Pryor*

### ***Soup Lunches***

Soup lunches have been well attended this season and my sincere thanks to everyone who has participated, contributed to making soup and setting up tables. I'm so incredibly grateful for all the help that has been received. I'd also like to acknowledge the assistance given by ACRE and the Reading Room Trust which means that we can continue to provide this service free of charge (although donations are always welcome).

We will take a break for Christmas, so there will be no lunches on 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> December, and will return on 7<sup>th</sup> January. Please join us at 12.30 on Wednesdays if you're able to. It makes a break for those who are working at home, anyone just wanting a chance to chat, or catch up on village activities and interests – and you are assured of good conversations and nourishing soup.

*Bob Coates (07785 361345)*

**MG**  
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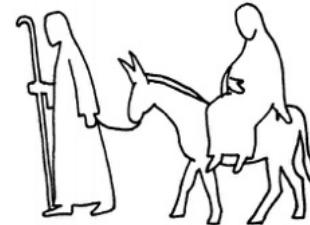
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## **CAROL SERVICE with CHRISTINGS by CANDLELIGHT**

**St Mary's Church, Weston Colville  
Christmas Eve, 4 pm**



**All ages welcome  
Festive refreshments afterwards  
Come and discover the meaning of  
Christ at Christmas time**



### ***Tea & Cakes***

Our Christmas Tea & Cakes will be held on the second Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> December. We have chosen this date as the 19<sup>th</sup> is the end of the school year.

This year we will be raising funds for the Arthur Rank Hospice who have had £800,000 withdrawn by Addenbrookes Hospital for end of life care.

Many families in our village have had this support for their loved ones, including my own for my dear husband Allen.

Please join us in the Reading Room, 3.30 - 5.00 pm as usual.

*Val and the Team*

### ***Weeds, Water and Whiskers***

Hello, my name is Emmeline. I am twelve, live in Weston Colville, and I am looking for small helpful jobs.

My services offer gardening work such as weeding your flower beds, raking leaves, watering houseplants/gardens, and caring for your small companion animals/cats when you go away, including feeding and cuddling them.

Please call or message 07779 277647.

*Jess Ashbridge*

## **Christmas Drinks Reception**

The St Mary's Church Christmas Reception will be at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Drinks and canapés will be served and everyone is welcome. Last year we explained the perilous condition of the medieval windows. The village has been incredibly generous and during the past year, all the funds have been raised and the restoration has been completed. This year we are not asking for any money! Just come along, join in the Christmas spirit, admire the windows and be sociable. We look forward to seeing you!

**Bob Coates, Churchwarden (07785 361345)**

## **West Wrating Café Christmas**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30 am - 1.30 pm** in the village hall.

There will be lots of Christmassy craft and gift stalls plus our usual lovely homemade cakes and some festive additions. Do join us for this popular event.

I thought it timely to explain the idea behind our café which is held on the first Saturday of each month. Our aim is to bring people together to share coffee and cakes and to chat in a friendly environment. We like to welcome newcomers to the village and take time to introduce them to neighbours and hopefully new friends. It would be lovely to have more families joining us. We have toys available to keep the children entertained. There is a donations pot and the money is used to support local charities and good causes. We recently gave a generous amount towards a defibrillator which will be available at The Chestnut Tree pub.

We rely on the support of volunteers who bake, serve and wash up; without their help we could not run the café. If anyone would like to help in any way we would love to hear from you! It wouldn't be every month, as the work is shared. Feel free to contact me.

**Jan (07808725495, Jan.davey5@btinternet.com)**

## **Such A Long Time To Know People**

There are still a few copies left of the booklet we launched in October called 'Such A Long Time To Know People: Barbara Atherton's Memories'. It's based on Barbara's recollections of living her whole

life in this area, first in Temple End and Little Thurlow and then, from 1954, at Weston Woods on Common Road. It makes fascinating reading.

Copies of the booklet are available in return for suggested donations of £3 each in aid of St Mary's Church, Weston Colville. If you'd like a copy, please just let me know.

**Gabrielle Cliff Hedges**  
**(gabrielle.cliffhedges@cantab.net, 07979 554758)**

## **Calendars of Local Wildlife**

I am preparing a 2026 wall calendar with photos of wildlife in and around Weston Colville, in our garden and the surrounding countryside, which will remind people of the wealth of natural life in our area. If anyone would be interested in having one or more copies, please contact me by 7<sup>th</sup> December. The pages will be A4-sized, so that it opens to A3-sized when hanging on the wall. The calendars will be be ordered from an online printer, and I will be happy to add extra copies to the order at cost price (expected to be less than £10 each).

**John Rogers (290221, jrogers11@btinternet.com)**

## **Jam Night at The Chestnut Tree**

The Chestnut Tree pub will be opening specially on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December from 7 pm onwards for the Christmas Special Jam Night. This will replace what would have been the jam session on 24<sup>th</sup> December.

All are welcome; no charge, just come and have a go, or come and listen to some fabulous musicians performing, no rehearsals needed. Many thanks to Jennie and her team at The Chestnut Tree, and to Nigel Job for his hard work in organising all this.

**Jeanette Job**



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## West Wratting Book Club

Our book for November was 'Paris Echo' by Sebastian Faulks. As the title suggests it is set mainly in Paris. The main characters are an Algerian teenager, Tariq, fed up with his life and keen to find out something more about his half-French mother, and an American woman, Hannah, who had spent time there as a History Major and had come back to research the women of Paris during the German occupation of the Second World War.

It was described as a comfortable and interesting read, well written, and most enjoyed it very much. Some found the flipping about between characters without notice confusing. There was an interesting contrast between the two main protagonists. We were struck by the 'ignorance' of the young about the history of their country and culture, as well as the light it shone on the attitudes of the French during the Second World War, many of whom seemed to want a comfortable life even if the Nazis won, with little admission of guilt about siding with the German troops when it suited them. It was revealing to some to read of the war crimes of Nazis on French and English SOE spies, as well as of the French on Algerians (although there were atrocities on both sides) and the Jewish people.

Others felt the book highlighted the greyness of war – neither 'good nor bad' and not clear cut. Although it seemed to be a happy ending for all, one person wondered if this was the case. Some thought the end quite bland. Another theme was whether it is always a good thing to hold on to memories and hurts for too long, whether national or personal?

Scores were 7 and 8 out of 10.

We will not be reviewing a book for December as we are having our Christmas meal, so we will next meet at The Chestnut Tree on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 will be held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm – come along and hear a review of the outgoing year and ideas for the coming year. Straight after the AGM a new committee is formed. Come and join in, develop your ideas, and deliver even more for our community.

The wine-tasting evening was well attended, with wines from around the world presented by Adam from Corney and Barrow. An unusual dessert wine called 'Stickey Mickey' caught the imagination, as did the tasting/notes; this wine had not been produced since 2017 as the grape-growing conditions were not right until 2021/2.

The November lottery draw winners were: first number 9, second number 31 and third number 28. Please contact Jan at [jan.davey5@btinternet.com](mailto:jan.davey5@btinternet.com) if you would like to join.

Have a merry festive season, everyone, and look out for future hall events in *Challenge* next year.

*Martin Davey, Chair (penywaen1@gmail.com)*

## West Wratting Speedwatch

We are back on the roads again, educating drivers and reporting those who are over the speed limit to Cambridgeshire Police. We like to operate at least one session each month; this is down from two several years ago due to the declining number of volunteers. We do have a new recruit this month though (thank you) which has helped a lot. If you would like to join us as well it is easy – you just complete an on-line training process (not an exam) and you will be insured by Cambridge Police to work with the team.

The work we do helps all our villages, not just West Wratting, so if you are in a neighbouring village we would love to hear from you, perhaps we could help out each other's teams? We do have fun on the roadside, catching up with each other, and the banter – well, I could not possibly repeat any of it here . . . Contact me at [penywaen1@gmail.com](mailto:penywaen1@gmail.com). Thank you.

*Martin Davey*

**Jo Taylor**

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### Parish Matters

Over Advent and Christmas I often revisit well-loved writings. As a child I used to perform, with my brother and sister, the poem by Clement-Clarke Moore: *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* for my parents on Christmas Eve. As an adult I have enjoyed re-reading *Approaching Christmas* by Jane Williams, a companion to the Christmas season rich in joy and wisdom, as well as a collection of poems and commentaries by Janet Morley entitled *'haphazard by starlight: a poem a day from Advent to Epiphany'*.



The intriguing title: *'haphazard by starlight'* actually comes from a poem, entitled *BC-AD*, by U A Fanthorpe. Ursula Fanthorpe was a poet and a Quaker, who used to write a new Christmas poem each year to include with her Christmas cards to friends. They were usually short and sought a fresh, unsentimental take on the familiar story. This approach could also provide a jolt of defamiliarisation for the reader, reminding us of the extraordinary nature of the gospel truth.

As part of the Christmas carol service at Hildersham church some years ago, members of our children's church council gave a reading of *BC-AD*. It's a poem in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet, but with the lines divided into threes rather than fours, each one beginning with the phrase 'This was the moment . . .'. Indeed, the poem begins with the dramatic announcement: 'This was the moment when Before / Turned into After'.

The poem then continues in a slightly meandering style and contains references to familiar characters from the birth narrative – the shepherds described as 'a few farm workers' and the magi as 'three / Members of an obscure Persian sect'. The meandering style is interrupted, however, by the jolt of last two lines, which presents the moment those familiar characters, perhaps to their own astonishment, 'Walked haphazard by starlight straight / Into the kingdom of heaven'.

Amidst all that is comfortingly familiar about Christmas, I hope we can be alert to the astonishing good news of the gospels, even if it does sometimes seem we are walking towards this truth as if 'haphazard by starlight'. For the account of Jesus' birth speaks of a moment when everything changed. A child, born in humble circumstances, is the Christ child who is greeted, as Luke's gospel says, as "Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord". Good news conveyed by these simple words, which invite a lifetime's reflection: Jesus is "Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us'". Good news worth responding to, celebrating and sharing, and which can shape the way we live in all the times and seasons of our lives.

**Rev Iain McColl**

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### **Peter and Ruth Lloyd Trust – 2026 Award**

Yes, incredibly another year has flown past! We are now inviting applications for pupils starting university in September 2026. 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, and Veterinary Medicine, but all will be considered.

The applicant should be living in one of the parishes bordering the old RAF Wratting Common airfield – Great & Little Thurlow, West Wickham, Carlton cum Willingham, West Wratting, Weston Colville and 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 offers are confirmed.

For further information about the trust and the award please contact Jonathan Drury (01223 290087). For an application form please apply via email to: [peter.ruthlloydtrust@sky.com](mailto:peter.ruthlloydtrust@sky.com)

The application form and supporting documents must be received by 5<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at the latest.

**Jonathan Drury**

### **Kingsway Solar Community Action**

It's been a busy month. We've published a report on land use and solar energy, drawing on new modelling by Tony Day showing that large-scale solar offers limited grid benefits. We've promoted the **#AskEd** campaign with **Stop Oversized Solar**, challenging the government's renewable-energy strategy.

We issued an **Open Letter to Ed Miliband** in response to the government's claim that 76% of the public 'wouldn't mind' living next to a solar farm. We also contacted George Freeman MP following the APPGSTA (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science & Technology in Agriculture) report 'Feeding Britain Sustainably to 2050', which warns that current land-use policies risk undermining UK food security.

We are continuing to encourage our MP to engage more fully with the inadequacies of the consultation process, which has left many residents feeling poorly informed.

During the consultation phase we strengthened our links with communities along the grid-connection corridor, and we are now working with BEAT (Burwell Energy Awareness Team) to help maintain pressure on these issues.

Keep an eye on our News page for the latest updates, announcements and links to useful resources: [kingswayaction.org/news](http://kingswayaction.org/news)

It has also been a busy month for wildlife, with sightings of golden plover and lapwings near the Fleam Dyke as winter migration gets under way. Please continue to log any wildlife observations on *iRecord*, particularly along the grid connection corridor. Every record counts.

We are working closely with the Parish Council Alliance who are seeking legal representation, which will be critical in the next stage. Our Crowd Justice fundraiser supports this effort. This ensures that donations only go towards a fully-funded case, with automatic refunds if targets aren't met. Every pledge, large or small, helps.

Finally, a note on sign thefts. During the consultation it was wonderful to see so many signs, banners and stickers displayed. Unfortunately, after some early

incidents, we've now had further reports of signs being taken. These are expensive to produce and funded entirely through your donations. If signs are removed from private land, please report it to the police and request an incident number. This helps us build a clearer picture of what's happening.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas, and thank you for your support throughout 2025.

**Useful links:**

- Join KSCA: [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/how-to-join-us](http://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/how-to-join-us)
- Request a sticker: [hello@kingswayaction.org](mailto:hello@kingswayaction.org)
- Support our campaign: [gofund.me/no-to-kingsway-solar-farm](http://gofund.me/no-to-kingsway-solar-farm)
- Contribute to legal funds: [crowdjustice.com/case/kingswaysolarcommunitylegalaction](http://crowdjustice.com/case/kingswaysolarcommunitylegalaction)
- Follow us on Facebook & Instagram: [#kingswaysolaraction](https://www.instagram.com/kingswaysolaraction)

*Kathy Day*

**Your Local MP, Pippa Heylings**

One of the proudest moments in my time as an MP so far has been delivering our petition to save Arthur Rank Hospice's beds to Number 10 Downing Street in November. I was joined by my fellow Cambridgeshire Lib Dem MPs and the most amazing group of people who have felt Arthur Rank Hospice's care first-hand or whose family members have – and the petition we delivered was more than 15,500 strong!

We continue to fight to restore the funding to ensure all 23 beds at the hospice remain open because everyone deserves access to excellent care right up until the very end of their lives. Thank you so much to the group that travelled as well as all the passionate constituents and colleagues across the county that made this happen.

I've also been out on the doorsteps listening to residents and holding my MP surgeries. This has been invaluable in helping me prioritise the work that matters most to you and to take that forward as your voice in Parliament. If you would like to keep up to date with my work, you can register for my e-

newsletter, available at

[www.pippaheylings.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.pippaheylings.org.uk/newsletter)

*Pippa Heylings MP*



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**Wadlow Wind Farm Community Fund**

Local groups and organisations within five miles of Wadlow Wind Farm can apply for grants of up to £10,000 to support community projects.

Recent grants have helped:

- West Wrating Village Hall improve accountics with a new damping system (£4,574.40)
- Meadow Primary School PTA replace playground equipment for younger children (£9,426)

The next deadline for applications is 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026. Apply online at: [www.cambscf.org.uk/funds/wadlow](http://www.cambscf.org.uk/funds/wadlow). Email: [info@cambscf.org.uk](mailto:info@cambscf.org.uk) with any questions.



**WINTER FAIR**  
**SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**DECEMBER**



**12noon to 2.30pm**  
**BRINKLEY MEMORIAL HALL**



Come along and have lunch.  
There will be Homemade soup  
and Sausage in a bun,  
followed by Mince Pies and Chocolate  
Brownies.



Gift Stall - Christmas stalls  
Cakes - Tombola - Raffle - Games



Chance to win a lovely homemade Christmas Cake

COME AND SEE THE BRINKLEY CHRISTMAS CARD  
YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SIGN UP

Please support this fund-raising event for our  
village church, St Mary's, Brinkley

*Pippa*

### **Weston Colville Parish Council**

A meeting was held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Full minutes and meeting documents are available at <https://www.westoncolville-pc.gov.uk>

Cllr Harvey reported that he was chasing to have contractors cut the ditch behind Horseshoe Lane/The Green. He advised that the SCDC response to the Kingsway Consultation had been added to their website. The report was very damning, particularly about the lack of engagement and communication from Kingsway.

Cllr Batchelor would chase up clearing and replacing the salt bin contents.

**Flooding** – Cllr Garrod would meet with Cllr Harvey to inspect the works that had been carried out and what would need to be carried out. Cllr Durham had alerted the flood wardens with a forecasted storm, and cleared the gulleys, but it had not come to anything.

**MVAS** – the signs were located on Mill Hill, and near the recreation ground. There had been a significant increase in traffic through the village due to the road closure in West Wrating. It was felt that the repeater 30 sign on Common Road would be a good location, however the post needed to be reported, and replaced. The clerk would carry this out.

**Kingsway Solar** – a verbal report was provided from the PC Alliance Funding Meeting. The parish council's response to the Statutory Consultation was submitted prior to 29<sup>th</sup> October. The next stage would be the submission to the Planning Inspectorate in March. Cllr Durham was thanked for sending the response from the PC, and the councillors for their contributions.

**RBL Poppy Wreath** – it was the turn of Weston Colville PC to lay the wreath at Wrating Common. Cllr Pagonis would lay the wreath. £15 would be donated.

**Risk Assessment/Health and Safety** – The defibrillator cabinet would be installed on 4<sup>th</sup> November. Once installed the clerk would book free training for parishioners through Community Heartbeat. The defibrillator would be registered with The Circuit and Webnos, which would ensure that it was registered with the ambulance service.

**Biodiversity** - Cllr Garrod was maintaining the pond, and it was felt that the pond did not need any further

excavation. The bullrushes were controlled, to ensure they did not encroach too much. The willow tree and brambles were also controlled. The hedging by the telegraph pole would be cut back, to increase visibility, for vehicles exiting the Reading Room car park. The area offered big benefits for biodiversity, particularly for insect/birds. The pond had dried up due to the very dry summer. It was determined to apply for SCDC's grant for six free trees, and to apply for one larger sapling. Cllrs Garrod and Jennings would organise this.

**Playgrounds** – no action required on the recreation ground. The clerk was querying the price of the inspection of Church End, as the inspector had completed two separate reports for the areas on the recreation ground for £250, and wanted to charge a further £155 to inspect Church End, which seemed excessive. The contractor would be adding turf around the slide in Church End.

**Dates for 2026** – 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Jess Ashbridge, Parish Clerk**

### **West Wrating Parish Council**

The parish council met on 10<sup>th</sup> November in the village hall. Five members of the public attended.

**Village Updates** – residents noted the forthcoming village hall AGM (on 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm), ongoing Speedwatch activity, and continued footpath and village maintenance. Volunteers for litter picking and minor maintenance are always welcome, and should contact the clerk. A query about the possible donation of a storage container to the Sports Pavilion was discussed; the council explained that required planning and fire-safety documentation had not been provided.

### **The Chestnut Tree**

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**Council Business**— the councillor vacancy remains open, and anyone interested should contact the clerk. Work will shortly begin on the 2026/27 budget, following the same approach as last year, with the Finance Committee meeting planned for early December.

The council approved the updated lease for the d'Abo Tennis Club, and agreed that the £1,200 annual insurance grant to the village hall will continue each year.

Two event requests at the Sports Pavilion were approved (Scouts/Guides on 15<sup>th</sup> November, and a members' event on 21<sup>st</sup> November).

The clerk will also contact The Chestnut Tree pub regarding support for the village defibrillator.

**Planning & Highways** – no new planning applications were received. A matter concerning an overhanging tree will be raised with Greater Cambridge Shared Planning.

The council noted that West Wrating was not included in the 2025 20 mph scheme grants, and that the delayed Local Highway Improvement works (gates and lining) remain outstanding; this will be escalated by the County Councillor.

**Sports Pavilion Club** – the SPC Committee is continuing work on a revised structure for the club. The council agreed to collaborate on a clearer process for assessing and approving additional events, ensuring safety, compliance and appropriate documentation.

**Village Assets** – 3,000 litres of bark were delivered and spread in the play park; missing bolt caps were replaced, and defibrillator pads renewed following its use in September.

**Kingsway Solar Farm** – the council approved its response to the statutory consultation.

**Next Meeting** – the next parish council meeting will be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 pm in the village hall.

*Cameron Biggs, Clerk*

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### Balsham Singers

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Christmas Concert will take place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 4 pm in Holy Trinity Church, Balsham.

Tickets are £12 for adults, £1 for under 16s. Tickets are available from Balsham and Gt Abington post offices and online at Ticket source: [ticketsource.co.uk/balshamsingers](https://ticketsource.co.uk/balshamsingers) or through choir members, and are selling fast. Last Christmas we had a full house so we'd advise buying a ticket in advance to be sure of a seat.

We will be holding a raffle so please bring some cash along with you. All proceeds of the raffle will be sent to the Royal Papworth charity, which also celebrates 30 years in 2025.

We are always grateful for the loyal support of our audience and hope that everyone who comes along will enjoy our concert.

*Jo Stinton*

### Balsham WI

The November meeting featured a play performed by 11 members of the group, which told the story of the last 100 years of Balsham and the WI nationally from its start in 1915.



Members of the cast were each dressed to represent a decade from the last century, and the play was accompanied by many photographs from the archives.

Our next meeting will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> December in the Pavilion at 7.30 pm, and will take the form of our annual Christmas celebration, together with a review of the past year's meetings to finalise our celebration of the centenary year.

*Debbie Mower (balshamwi@gmail.com)*

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### Balsham Picture House

Our Christmas film will be on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December, and we will celebrate Christmas early with the film and all drinks and festive nibbles FREE – on the house – so please come along from 7 pm onwards and enjoy the evening.

**BALSHAM PICTURE HOUSE**



**PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN AT WORLD'S END**

After losing Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp) to the locker of Davy Jones (Bill Nighy), the team of Will Turner (Orlando Bloom), Elizabeth Swan (Keira Knightley) and Captain Barbosa (Geoffrey Rush) make their final alliances with the pirate world to take on the forces of Lord Cutler Beckett (Tom Hollander) and his crew, including Davy Jones, who he now controls. It's not going to be easy, as they must rescue Sparrow, convince the pirate lords to join them and defeat Beckett, whilst each pirate has their own route to follow.

**Sat. Dec 6<sup>th</sup> Doors open 7pm**

In a departure from our usual genre we will be showing the last and best of the Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean trilogy - 'At World's End' is the jolly choice for the evening and stars include Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley and Geoffrey Rush. This swashbuckling fantasy adventure film has won lots of Oscars and is rated 12 so bring the kids along as well!

It's a longish film so we will have a mid-film break to recharge our glasses etc. Doors open at 7 pm and film at 7.30.

Our January film night will be on the second Saturday of the month, on 10<sup>th</sup> January, so a week later than normal. The film will be the Steve Coogan comedy 'The Penguin Lessons' (12).

*Dick Paden*

### The Meadow Primary School, Balsham

Our whole school came together to mark Remembrance Day with respect and reflection. The children gathered outside for a special assembly, where we observed a two-minute silence, beautifully signalled by the sound of the church bells. Many pupils brought in pennies to place on a large poppy, creating a striking tribute to those who fought in the war. We also heard a thoughtful and moving poem read by our Year 6 captains, giving everyone a moment to pause and consider the meaning of remembrance. It was a touching and memorable event for all involved.

The school was filled with warmth (and lots of fluffy slippers!) as we celebrated Children in Need with a special Pyjama Day. Pupils donated money to the charity and embraced the fun of coming to school in their cosiest nightwear. Despite the wet and wild weather, our children showed fantastic resilience – staying indoors all day, continuing their learning, and still finding plenty of moments to play and enjoy themselves.

Our School Council also hosted a popular cake sale, raising additional funds which will go directly towards new resources to enrich our playtimes. We

[www.westwratting.org.uk](http://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.



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are incredibly proud of their leadership and the brilliant support shown by our school community.

### Iron Age Adventures at Wandlebury

Our Year 3 and 4 pupils enjoyed an exciting trip to Wandlebury for a hands-on Iron Age Experience. The children stepped back in time as they took part in activities such as weaving willow, cooking bread on sticks over a fire (and quickly devouring it!), and even trying their hand at slingshots. They were fascinated to learn about the Iron Age hill fort that once stood on the site. We were incredibly lucky to enjoy sunshine for most of the day, making the experience even more memorable.

Do you have a child due to start Reception next September? There is still time to come and visit The Meadow! We love welcoming families into our school to experience the nurturing, vibrant environment we offer. If you are applying for a school place, please remember that the deadline for submissions is January. Our doors are always open for tours, and we are delighted to share the wonderful things happening across our classrooms.

*Faye Facer, Assistant Headteacher*

### Linton Village College



School trips are an essential part of life at LVC, enriching our curriculum and offering experiences beyond the classroom. One of the most significant events in our calendar is the two-yearly Battlefields trip to Northern France and Belgium.

Led by the History Department, the trip takes 95 students from KS3 and KS4 on a journey through key sites of World War I. Starting in Ypres, students visit Essex Farm Cemetery and an Advanced Dressing Station, learning how medical care was delivered close to the front lines. At Mansel Copse and the Somme, they explore the realities of trench warfare and the immense human cost of conflict. The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing and the moving Last Post ceremony deepen their understanding of remembrance and loss. Throughout the weekend, students develop historical knowledge of why men fought, empathy for those who endured unimaginable hardship, and insight into the impact of war on individuals and societies.



Last month we also had over 100 students visiting Bletchley Park, the historic home of World War II codebreakers. Here, they watched a live demonstration of the Enigma machine and took part in hands-on decoding activities, discovering how logic, mathematics, and teamwork were used to crack secret messages. The experience not only illuminated the vital role of codebreaking in the Allied victory but also highlighted its lasting influence on modern computing and cybersecurity.

Both trips offer students a unique opportunity to connect with history in a tangible way. These experiences remind us that the past is not just something we read about, and that it shapes the world we live in today.

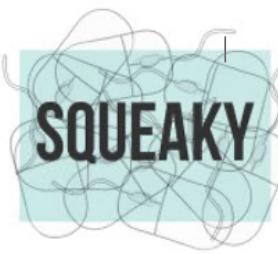
*Laura Heard*

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### Thank You from Saffron Walden Rotary

Another great response from our South Cambs villages to our Ukraine appeal at Abington School on 8<sup>th</sup> November: our van was totally filled and more, and over £2,000 in donations too.

Thank you to everyone for your very kind and generous support.

*Tony Collett*

### Ghost Stories by Candlelight

There will be an evening of ghost stories in Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham, on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> 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=odddtcreator>

*Athene Hunt (huncam2015@gmail.com)  
 The Friends of Hildersham Church*

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### Linton & District Historical Society

Our October meeting featured 'The Last Best West' Emigration to Canada, a well-researched and informative presentation by Ann Fletcher, whose own family emigrated to Canada at the turn of the century. This led her to delve into the background of this prolific world-wide advertising campaign promoting 'Emigration to Canada'. It was a thought provoking evening, and a fascinating talk.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 in Linton Village Hall, and will feature a return visit by David Caulfield, who will give a talk on his experiences of sixty years of popular music. He will also play and sing songs from that exciting period of musical history.

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

*Ian & Margaret Creek*

### West Wickham & District Gardening Club

With the leaves tumbling and early morning mists returning, we know we are heading into winter with all its botanical stars lighting up our garden. From the sweet scents of *Sarcococca* to the first stunning hellebores, there's plenty to enjoy.



AFFILIATED SOCIETY  
 RHS  
 AFFILIATED SOCIETY

So, it is fitting that we are celebrating the seasons at our **Christmas Social Evening** on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm in West Wickham Village Hall. Wine, soft drinks and refreshments will be provided by the club to help the members get into the Christmas spirit. This year we are beginning with an informal group chat about our

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gardening experiences over the past year, before circulating and enjoying each other's company.

We hope that your winter walks will also inspire you to enter this year's photo competition. It's open to everyone in West Wickham and the surrounding area. The categories for 2025/26 are . . . 'Along the Path', 'Lovely Leaves', and 'Sky's the Limit'. Photos to be taken after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 and by the end of August 2026.

Meanwhile keep the competition in mind when you're out and about through the year ahead. We had some great entries last year, with this one being the winner by Linda Upton of 'Light and Dark'.

Email your entries and queries for the photo competition to Alice and Andy Mitchell  
 (photo@westwickham.org).

For club information or if you'd like to help at one of our events, please contact me.

*Sally Collins (wwdgc@westwickham.org)*



## Christmas & New Year Opening Times, Granta Medical Practices

| Date                                 | Opening Hours                                   | Repeat Prescriptions              |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Saturday 20 Dec</b>               | Open for pre-booked appointments only (Sawston) | Place order today, pick up 24 Dec |
| <b>Sunday 21 Dec</b>                 | CLOSED  | Place order today, pick up 24 Dec |
| <b>Monday 22 Dec</b>                 | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 29 Dec |
| <b>Tuesday 23 Dec</b>                | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 30 Dec |
| <b>Wednesday 24 Dec</b>              | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 31 Dec |
| <b>Thursday 25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY</b> | CLOSED  | Place order today, pick up 2 Jan  |
| <b>Friday 26 Dec</b>                 | CLOSED  | Place order today, pick up 2 Jan  |
| <b>Saturday 27 Dec</b>               | Open for pre-booked                             | Place order today, pick up 2 Jan  |
| <b>Sunday 28 Dec</b>                 | CLOSED  | Place order today, pick up 2 Jan  |
| <b>Monday 29 Dec</b>                 | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 2 Jan  |
| <b>Tuesday 30 Dec</b>                | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 5 Jan  |
| <b>Wednesday 31 Dec</b>              | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 6 Jan  |
| <b>Thursday 1 Jan NEW YEAR'S DAY</b> | CLOSED  | Place order today, pick up 7 Jan  |
| <b>Friday 2 Jan</b>                  | Open as usual                                   | Place order today, pick up 7 Jan  |
| <b>Saturday 3 Jan</b>                | Open for pre-booked appointments only (Sawston) | Place order today, pick up 8 Jan  |



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December 2025



# RECYCLE YOUR TREE



Arthur Rank Hospice Charity



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- Registration Opens 15th Nov 2025
- Registration Closes 4th Jan 2026
- Collecting 8-10th January 2026

gift aid it



After costs, Arthur Rank Hospice Charity receive 90% of monies raised and up to 10% will be distributed by Just Helping to other local charities. More information on where your donation goes can be found on our website. Just Helping supports volunteers, businesses, and charities to contribute to their community and the environment. Our national Christmas tree collection raises essential funds for charities in the local community.



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 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](mailto:christmastrees@arhc.org.uk) or call us on 01223 675888.

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

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

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Black bins:</b> | Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> December,<br>Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> January                    |
| <b>Blue bins:</b>  | Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> & 31 <sup>st</sup> December,<br>Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup> January |
| <b>Green bins:</b> | Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> December,<br>Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> January                                       |

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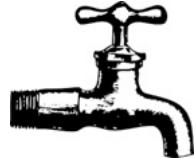
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**Revd Michael Wilcockson**, Rural Dean  
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**Revd Hannah Threlfall**, Community Minister  
01223 481090, [RevThrelfall24@outlook.com](mailto:RevThrelfall24@outlook.com)

**Mr Steven Wheeler**, Licensed Lay Minister  
01223 290396, [stevenwheeler406@gmail.com](mailto:stevenwheeler406@gmail.com)

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**Weston Colville Parish Clerk:** Jess Ashbridge,  
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**West Wrating Parish Clerk:** Cameron Biggs,  
[clerk@westwrating.org.uk](mailto:clerk@westwrating.org.uk)

*Usual dates and times; apologies, but no information available to cover Christmas period at time of printing.*

**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  |

| DEC                         | 9.30 am   | 11.00 am   | Afternoon   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| 7 <sup>th</sup>             |   | <b>United Service with Holy Communion</b> –Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Revd Iain McColl</i>  | <b>Christingle Songs of Praise (4.00 pm)</b> – West Wrating, <i>John &amp; Scilla Harvey</i>  |
| 14 <sup>th</sup>            | <b>Holy Communion</b> – West Wickham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br><b>Morning Worship</b> – West Wrating, <i>Alistair Collen</i>  | <b>Holy Communion</b> – Great Abington, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Alistair Collen</i><br><b>Café Church</b> – Hildersham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> | <b>Christingle (4.00 pm)</b> –Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i><br><b>Taizé Service (6.00 pm)</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Steven Wheeler</i>  |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>            | <b>Holy Communion</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br><b>Holy Communion</b> – West Wickham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i><br><b>Christmas Creative Church</b> – Abington Hub, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall / Rosemary Mead</i> | <b>Carol Service</b> – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>   | <b>Carol Service (3.00 pm)</b> – Hildersham, <i>Revd Michael Wilcockson</i><br><b>Carol Service (4.00 pm)</b> – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br><b>Carol Service (6.30 pm)</b> – Great Abington, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>   |
| 24 <sup>th</sup><br>(Wed)   |   | <b>Christmas Eve Crib Service (10.30 am)</b> – Little Abington, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>   | <b>Carol Services with blessing of the crib – (4.00 pm)</b> – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br><b>(6.00 pm)</b> – West Wickham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i><br><b>Carols &amp; Christingle Service (4.00 pm)</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Steven Wheeler</i><br><b>Midnight Mass (11.30 pm)</b> – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br>Little Abington, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i> |
| 25 <sup>th</sup><br>(Thurs) | <b>Christmas Day Communion</b> – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br>West Wickham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i><br>Hildersham, <i>Rev Kathy Bishop</i>   | <b>Christmas Day Morning Worship</b> – Great Abington, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i><br>Balsham, <i>Revd Hannah Threlfall</i>                            |   |
| 28 <sup>th</sup>            |   | <b>United Service of Holy Communion</b> –Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl / Alastair France</i>  | <b>Taizé service</b> – Weston Colville, <i>Steven Wheeler</i>   |

## DIARY

### DECEMBER 2025

Sat 6 ‘Christmas Café, West Wrating Village Hall  
Winter Fair, Brinkley  
Great Expectations’, St Mary’s  
Balsham Picture House, ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’

Sun 7 Christingle, St Andrew’s, West Wrating

Tues 9 West Wrating Village Hall AGM  
Balsham WI

Fri 12 Tea & Cakes, Weston Colville Reading Room

Sat 13 Balsham Singers Christmas Concert

Mon 15 West Wickham & District Gardening Club

Tues 16 Linton & District Historical Society

Wed 17 Christmas Drinks, St Mary’s

Thurs 18 Lunch Club, The Chestnut Tree

Tues 23 Jam Night at The Chestnut Tree

Wed 24 Carol Service with Christingles, St Mary’s

Sat 27 Lower Wood Working Party



### Thanks and Seasonal Greetings

My usual thanks go to everybody involved with **Challenge**, especially those who distribute and deliver it throughout the year. Thanks also to everybody who sends articles, news, and reports, and of course the advertisers and parish councils whose support allows **Challenge** to be distributed free of charge to every household in both villages.

Anne

**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.

**EARLIER THAN USUAL – please note that copy date for January issue is Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December**