

VILLAGE VOICE

NEWS FROM WEST WICKHAM & STREETLY END

FEBRUARY 2014

ISSUE 130

VILLAGE DIARY

- Sat 1 **Farmers Market. 9.00 - 12.00**
Linton Village College
- Sun 2 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
- Tue 4 Black wheeled bin collection
- Wed 5 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Sun 9 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
- Mon 10 **Local History Club. *Where there's a will: probate records.* Talk by Sue Sampson, Cambs Archives. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
- Tue 11 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
- Wed 12 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Sun 16 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Deadline for items to go in the March Village Voice
- Mon 17 **Gardening Club. *Veteran Trees, Trees and the Law, Pests and Diseases, Right Tree- Right Place.* Talk by David Mitchell. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
- Tue 18 Black wheeled bin collection
- Wed 19 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Sun 23 Family Service. 9.30, St Mary's Church
- Tue 25 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
- Wed 26 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Fri 28 **Daisy Chains Pre-School Quiz. 7.30pm, Village Hall. See ad on back page.**

Daisy Chains Pre-School meets Monday to Friday 9.30 – 12.30 in the Village Hall

THE VILLAGE HALL

is available to hire at the rates below, it also offers the following equipment: Badminton, Short Tennis and 3 Table Tennis tables.

Village Hall rates (for Village use):

Sport Hire	day or evening £5.00 per hour.
Meeting Room day	(9.00 – 19.00) £5.00 per hour.
	evening £7.00 per hour.
Main Room day	(9.00 – 19.00) £7.00 per hour
	evening £10.00 per hour.
Complete Hall day	(9.00 – 19.00) £12.00 per hour
	evening £18.00 per hour
Children's party	£30.00 daytime
	£43.00 evening
Adult's party/disco	£60.00
Wedding reception	£150.00

To book the Village Hall contact Louise Salter
T: 01223 291226
or visit www.westwickham.org

The Village Voice is sponsored by West Wickham Parish Council and delivered free to all households in West Wickham and Streetly End. The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

WEST WICKHAM - PARISH PLAN REVISITED

In June 2009 I proposed that the village should look into the possibilities of developing a Parish Plan. After a few meetings and discussions with the Parish Council it was decided to undertake a Village Survey instead, to gather information from residents to see what issues they needed the Parish Council to address.

The most common responses submitted were the importance of the bus service; the need for improved village facilities and the need for smaller and more affordable housing in the Parish. There has been limited success in two of these areas with the transport budget coming under severe pressure an acceptable bus service has been devised; a new playground has been built but unfortunately, the development of houses within the Parish concentrated on larger and more expensive dwellings.

At the last Parish Council meeting in December it was decided to look at developing a Parish Plan to give the Parish Council a means of formally outlining how the residents wish the village to be developed or provided with improved services such as: roads and footpaths repairs, better drainage and faster broadband.

Village Plans are a recognised document which local government have to take into consideration when making decisions and is a powerful tool in establishing the residents' expectations; it is not a wish list but a formal statement of expectation. The scope of such a Plan does not have to be all encompassing but as County Councillor Roger Hickford pointed out at the Parish Council meeting, it can be very limited in its scope and made to reflect the residents' main concerns.

I have been asked to start the process once more and would like people to contact me if they are interested in taking part in an initial working group to outline proposals for what could be in our Parish Plan. I would particularly welcome participants who would welcome access to affordable housing within the village and young people as their needs are very important in producing a document of this kind. I will put the previous information for what makes a Parish Plan on the Village Hall website. Anyone interested in contributing to the project should contact me before the end of February on Cambridge 290559 or by e mail to: trevor.hall@btinternet.com

Trevor Hall

OUR BUSES ARE THREATENED ONCE AGAIN!

This time it is the Service 46 Tuesday bus to Newmarket, which is subsidised by Cambridgeshire County Council. Cambridgeshire Future Transport has produced a short survey to help them understand how the local community uses bus services and how the services could be changed to better meet needs. The County Council has less funding available to subsidise buses, therefore this is an important process in deciding what local transport will look like in the future. The questionnaire is available to fill in electronically at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CambsFT2

If you would like a paper copy of the questionnaire, please contact me. Return your completed questionnaire by Friday 28 March to the CFT Team directly or via me.

What happens next with the survey? I'm told that after the deadline, all responses received by the CFT team will be collated and a report prepared. The report will be shared with you via a Working Group Meeting. Hopefully this is the same working group of which Janet & I are members!

Andrew Morris, 21 High Street, T: 290863

FROM THE VICARAGE

So much of what we do in the church and parish is dependent on good will from people who are volunteering their time and energy. In recent weeks, there have been a few emergency building repairs required in several of the seven churches because of wind damage, or collapsing floors, in addition to the other ongoing projects. People have not only lent equipment, but also offered time and skills to keep the churches open. I am often aware of how much extra (unpaid) time our local GPs, Parish Councillors, good neighbours and others put in to respond to need. In addition, I was heartened to see most of Balsham Village involved in the Plough Monday events last month which raised sums for charity, along with the Ceilidh at West Wrattling and the Village Lunch at Weston Colville, the Burns Night at Abington and the Lecture by Cathy Myer in Hildersham. This is only a fraction of the generosity of spirit that is here. This is inspiring.

I also find it inspiring to hear stories about people who defy the odds or refuse to be defined by adversity. I count myself as privileged because not a week goes by without encountering some such story – usually privately told – from people in our villages. In addition, in our midst there are people doing some amazing things in art, music, technology and community projects. To watch them at work can encourage our own latent creativity.

I was pointed to look at a poem called 'The Ponds' by Mary Oliver. It depicts lilies growing a pond, giving a spectacle of beauty. On closer inspection some are far from perfect, they curl, are lopsided or starting to decay. She yearns to be 'dazzled' by the beauty rather than to focus and be weighed down by the imperfections even though she knows that they are there. She writes

I want to believe I am looking
into the white fire of a great mystery.

I want to believe that the imperfections are nothing -
that the light is everything - that it is more than the sum
of each flawed blossom rising and fading. And I do.

In this month of February when the days are still short and the weather inclement, it is worth choosing to look at people and activities which are inspiring and creative. Not only does that make us more hopeful, it encourages us to be more generous in our good will.

Rev Julie Norris

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

The answers to the Christmas Quiz were:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Painted Lady | 2. Bank Vole |
| 3. Grass Snake | 4. Pied Wagtail |
| 5. White Poplar | 6. Red Campion |
| 7. Smooth Newt | 8. Fallow Deer |
| 9. Collared Dove | 10. Slow Worm |
| 11. Bee Orchid | 12. Scots Pine |
| 13. Common Toad | 14. Small Copper |

Correct entries were received from Katie Binks, June Brazier, Chris Magin, Janet Morris and Amy & Dave Sargent. First out of the hat was June Brazier, who will be receiving a small prize. I hope everyone enjoyed doing it, or trying.

Peter Grieve

CAROL SINGING

Many thanks to all those who came out carol singing on a pretty foul night just before Christmas, to those who provided much-needed refreshments en route, and to those who supported our collection so generously - even if you couldn't hear us singing over the wind and rain! We raised £143.80 for Age UK Cambridgeshire, to go towards the Small Villages Community Warden (who visits West Wickham).

Georgina Magin

WEST WICKHAM AND DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

We were delighted to welcome Fiona Edmond from Green Islands Gardens and Nursery, Ardleigh nr. Colchester. She gave us a talk on "Planting for Winter Colour and Scent" which was illustrated with wonderful slides of trees, shrubs and evergreen perennials. She had brought us cuttings of her shrubs in flower at the moment and the hall was filled with scent from the daphnes, sarcococcas, witchhazels and many more. Fiona is a garden designer and her island beds at the Nursery, full of rare plants, trees and shrubs are open five days a week and ten months of the year. She brought a large variety of plants with her which our members were very happy to purchase.

Next month David Mitchell (ex. Mid Suffolk Tree and Landscape Officer) will talk on "Veteran Trees, Trees and the Law, Pests and Diseases, Right Tree- Right Place". This will be on 17 February at 7:30 in West Wickham Village Hall.

Rosemary Yallop T: 01799584262

HORSERIDERS - PLEASE BE CONSIDERATE TO WALKERS

The wet weather has made most of our footpaths very slippery and awkward to walk on but the problem has been made worse by an increase in horses being ridden on them. In many places the footpaths have been badly churned up, making it very difficult for people to use!

Horses may legally only be ridden on bridleways and West Wickham has only one, from Burton End to the old hangers on Skippers Lane. Horses may be ridden on footpaths with the landowner's permission. If the riders don't have permission they are breaking the law; if they do have permission they still need to be considerate to other path users. I know it must be very pleasant to ride next to a friend and chat but 2 or more horses riding side by side churn up a wide stretch of path, leaving not much for the intended users of the paths - people walking. If landowners allow horse riding on footpaths that then become difficult for people to walk on they have an obligation to "make good" the footpath surface, otherwise they are creating an obstruction. The County Council can prosecute landowners that obstruct footpaths!

So please, let's have a bit of consideration and make our footpaths enjoyable to use by everyone.

Andrew Morris

1ST HORSEHEATH BROWNIES

Our Christmas Luncheon for the Over 60's was a great success with two violin solos, a tango (without the music), piano solos and a fabulous 'Riverdance' tap routine by Faye. All our guests went home with a Christmas gift, card and calendar made by the Brownies. Special thanks must go to Sarah, Paul, Grace, Tony, Pat, Stella and Mother for all their help before during and after the event. Also thanks must go to Gloria and Audrie for their delicious soups.

At the end of last term we said 'goodbye' to Holly, Millie and Katie, who have all moved on to Guides in Linton, Balsham and Brinkley. This week, at the start of our Centenary year, we welcomed Charlotte, Isabella, Saffia, Ellie, Daisy and Bethan to the unit making our number up to 30. We also welcomed Hera Waddington into the unit as our Young Leader.

We have some exciting events happening this year. We are off to London in April to the Bell Foundry with All Saints Church, our Annual Brownie Holiday to the Jarman Centre is in March, a Brownie Fun Day in June, a District outing in May and the finale to the Centenary year a Big Brownie Birthday Star Quest at Churchill College in July. I think we may struggle to fit in normal Brownie activities with all those events.

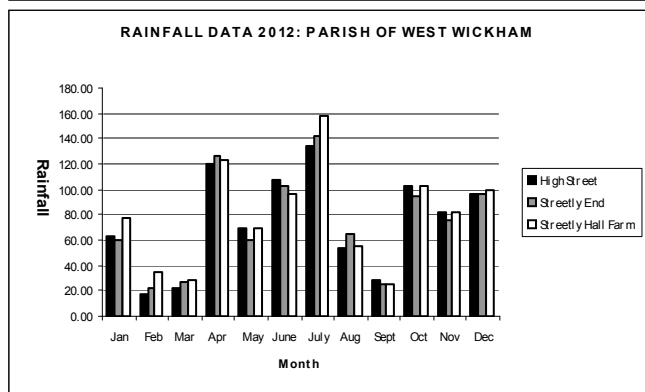
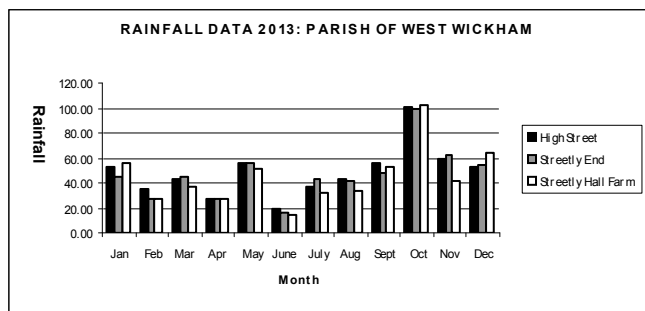
If you would like to put your daughter on our waiting list please register her at www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested. If you would like more information on what we do or would like to help us with a special skill you may have then please drop Sophie and I an email.

PAULINE and SOPHIE, E: brownies@horseheath.info

RAINFALL What a topsy turvy year!

Year total	2013	2012	2011
High Street	583mm	897.25mm	470mm
Streetly End	563.5mm	898.5mm	431mm
Streetly Hall Farm	541.5mm	951mm	445mm

A monthly comparison shows how unsettled our weather is.



NATURE NOTES

Reports have come in that December was the warmest for 25 years. The winter so far may have been wet and windy but even as I write there has not really been a cold spell and nature is understandably getting a bit confused. I know how it must feel. The confusion produces some unseasonable activity from birds, plants and insects, as Di describes "On the few sunny days the birds are already singing and pairing. Under a beautiful mackerel sky, high in a tree recently a song thrush was singing away, a sound to gladden the heart. A pair of dunnocks have been squabbling and chasing each other and the blue tits are also chasing each other in the garden. High in the trees, the rooks are sitting on their nests and cawing loudly, and in the hedgerows the lovely yellow catkins are swaying ... a true herald of spring." I can add to this the sound of the great spotted woodpecker drumming very loudly in a nearby tree, and the fact that the small tortoiseshell that was overwintering on the beam in our toilet seems to have disappeared, although in his case, he may have found a better location.

The Big Garden Birdwatch is coming up on the last weekend of January. So far this year there seem to be increased numbers of blue and great tits. Andrew also makes the same observation. It is something of a feeding frenzy on the bird feeders at times. We have a feeder on our kitchen window, and standing at the sink the other day I counted 52 visits in a 5 minute spell (26 great, 25 blue and 1 coal). Of course this situation is very attractive to the sparrow hawk, who visits regularly. I haven't actually noticed him making a catch yet – he has been thwarted on a couple of occasions by the close-knit branches of the ornamental pear tree, which the smaller birds can penetrate to safety. The bird that visits our garden is a male. Di reports a sighting of a female hunting. The sparrow hawk is a bird that is definitely on the up after almost catastrophic decline in the 1950s and 60s.

Di reports on other birds of prey doing very well in West Wickham. "Several people have reported seeing a young buzzard in the fields around Burton End, either sitting in the huge oak tree or on the plough. The buzzard is a big bird, and not so long ago quite a rare sight, but now the commonest bird of prey in Britain. The kestrels seem to be visible a lot more now, sitting patiently on the wire or posts watching....we are very lucky to have so many around, due apparently to our many verges and field set asides which provide their main hunting grounds.

Sightings that other people have reported this month are: a woodcock on the allotment, a fox on the back lawn of a house in Maypole Croft in broad daylight, a tawny owl sitting in the middle of the road at dusk and large flocks of 'chuckling' fieldfares on the ground and in the hedge rows. Not bad for a miserable month!"

Last year we had frogspawn in our pond very early in the year – it was then frozen over, but survived. I would like to hear of anyone who has frogspawn in their pond before the next Village Voice goes to press. It would also be good to hear some more mammal news. We know foxes and deer are doing OK, but what about the hedgehogs, badgers and moles?

Peter Grieve. T: 290503, email: mail@petergrieve.co.uk

LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE NEWS

We have started 2014 in consultative mode at LVC. Three years ago the college became an academy, moving away from Local Authority control and funding to a more independent status, funded directly by The Department for Education and holding a funding agreement with them also. In these 3 years we have continued to work closely with the LA, possibly even more closely than we did when we were a maintained school. We have also maintained strong links with local schools through other partnerships we have been involved with such as our Teaching Schools Alliance, CASSA, our locality partnership with the Sawston and Linton cluster schools, our membership of the Cambridge Area Partnership which gives us close links to the sixth forms our students choose to go to and the South Cambridgeshire Inclusion Partnership which enables us to keep children who are exhibiting challenging behaviour in a mainstream local setting.

These partnerships are important to us. They mean that we do not operate in isolation and that we are supported in the decisions that we make. We have not looked back since we became an academy: our results have improved further, we achieved a second 'Outstanding' grade at our last Ofsted inspection.

LVC now has the confidence and the capacity to set up a Multi Academy Trust: a family of schools governed by a legal trust which oversees the standards and resource management of all of the schools who may join it. Our Multi Academy Trust will be called Chilford Hundred Educational Trust, a name which reflects a geographical area from The Domesday Book and a purpose. The first school to join us looks likely to be The Meadow Primary School in Balsham. We have taken quite a cautious approach to setting up a MAT, sitting back and watching a number of other schools in the county do so before us. But the timing is now right for us and we are consulting on the change with parents, staff and other interested parties over the coming weeks.

Caroline Derbyshire, Principal

Daisy Chains
Pre-School West Wickham

QUIZ NIGHT

In support of Daisy Chains Pre-School
Registered Charity No: 1035276

Friday
28th February
West Wickham Village Hall
Bar 7.30pm – Quiz 8pm
£3.00 per person – Team of up to 6

Raffle Bar

MEADOW SCHOOL NEWS

We have enjoyed a very exciting start to the new term! Foundation/Key Stage One started their topic "Life on an Ocean Wave" with a trip to London Aquarium. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves looking at all the fish, sea creatures and penguins. There was a fantastic moment when we were walking past a busker by the London Eye and 96 children wearing Meadow School jumpers spontaneously burst into dance! We created our very own 'flash mob'. It was a wonderful sight. Lower Key Stage Two started their topic of "India" with an Indian workshop in the school. The workshop included traditional bollywood dance, tasting Indian food and making Mehndi patterns. Upper Key Stage Two have the exciting topic of "Galaxy Quest". Their entry point included composing music in the style of Holst's Planet Suite with some quite fabulous dancing to the music. They are linking some of their work to the Star Gazing Live programme on television. There is a planned trip to The Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge in the very near future.

As you are probably aware, the Meadow School and Linton Village College have formed a close working partnership over the past few months and LVC has been instrumental in helping us to develop and drive the school's improvement process. We are now looking at the next very natural step of becoming an official partner with LVC by joining the newly formed Multi Academy Trust. We are currently going through a consultation period and we are hoping we will be able to make this partnership a permanent one. It would mean that the Meadow School would convert to being an academy. There are many benefits to becoming part of a localised solution, such as economies of scale on areas such as purchasing, management and human resources, access to services that LVC runs, purchasing services that we feel are better quality or value than those provided from the Local Authority. We would be able to synchronise term dates and integrate the curriculum to give the children a more seamless 4-16 education. It would also give the school a long term, sustainable support structure to enable the school to get "back to Good" and to stay there.

Over the last few months the PTA has raised a substantial amount of money to upgrade our ICT Suite and we are now choosing the new computers for the ICT suite and the classroom based ICT equipment. Thank you once again PTA! The next project is developing the Key Stage One outside area. This is a great project as the children are involved in helping to design the area with their ideas and input! If you have any skills that you can offer to the school here, please do get in touch. The school would like to say a huge thank you to Mr Andrew Hodge who re-fenced the area around Key Stage One so that it can be used safely and securely all year round. Mr Hodge and his staff donated their time for free!

Nichola Connor, Interim Head Teacher

PRESS DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 16 February

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