

VILLAGE VOICE

NEWS FROM WEST WICKHAM & STREETLY END

NOVEMBER 2016

ISSUE 163

VILLAGE DIARY

- Tue 1 Black wheeled bin collection
Wed 2 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sun 6 All ages praise. 9.30, St Mary's Church
Tue 8 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
Wed 9 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sat 12 **Balsham Community Market. 2 - 5pm, Church Institute, Balsham. See page 5**
Sun 13 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Remembrance Day Service. 12.00, Wratting Common Memorial
Mon 14 **Local History Club. Agriculture & Industry - a potted history of Streetly End. Talk by Janet Morris. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
Tue 15 Black wheeled bin collection
Wed 16 **Deadline for items for the December issue of the Village Voice**
Sun 20 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Mon 21 **Gardening Club. Plants, man & history. Talk by John Walker. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
Tue 22 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
Wed 23 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sat 26 **Daisy Chains Pre-School Christmas Fair. 2 - 4pm, Village Hall. See page 2**
Sun 27 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Mon 28 **Parish Council Meeting. 7.30pm, Village Hall. All are welcome to attend**
Tue 29 Black wheeled bin collection
Wed 30 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall

Daisy Chains Pre-School meets

**Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9.30 – 12.30
Tuesday & Thursday 9.30—2.30 (includes lunch club) 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 £8.00/hour
Meeting Room	day (9.00 – 19.00) £5.00/hour. evening £7.00/hour.
Main Room	day (9.00 – 19.00) £7.00/hour evening £10.00/hour.
Complete Hall	day (9.00 – 19.00) £12.00/hour evening £18.00/hour

To book the Village Hall contact Louise Salter
T: 01223 291226

Email: bookings@westwickham.org
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.

BROADBAND UPDATE

Connecting Cambridgeshire and BT OpenReach have reported that installation of the two new cabinets is still going to schedule and both should be "live" by the end of December 2016.

This does not necessarily mean you are guaranteed to have Superfast Broadband (VDSL) in your home by the end of this year, even though Connecting Cambridgeshire's website suggests otherwise. The "live" date is when BT OpenReach will start accepting Superfast Broadband orders from your Internet Service Providers (ISPs) - the changeover is not immediate. You must first order Superfast Broadband from your ISP, who in turn will need to book an appointment for a BT OpenReach engineer to: (i) connect you to Superfast Broadband at the new cabinet; (ii) replace your existing main BT OpenReach faceplate in your house/office/etc with a new VDSL BT OpenReach faceplate; and (iii) optionally provide and configure either a VDSL modem or VDSL router. These appointments are subject to the availability of BT OpenReach engineers and your ISP. Typical delays for BT OpenReach engineers to provide Superfast Connections are one to two weeks, although this may extend to several weeks during periods of increased demand, taking the Superfast Broadband "live in your home" date past the end of January 2017.

Send an empty email to broadband-request@westwickham.org with the subject "subscribe" (remove quotes) if you would like to receive monthly updates via email, including notification as soon as the cabinets are open for orders for Superfast Broadband from your ISP. You can also register an interest to be notified when the cabinet goes live with Connecting Cambridgeshire at <http://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/contact/>. Please note that your telephone service will remain over the existing copper wire back to the exchange (see my Telephone Service article on page 3) and will not be affected by the introduction of Superfast Broadband. However, apart from the obvious improvement in your broadband speeds, your broadband reliability should improve with a Superfast Broadband subscription.

Alex Schuilenburg

RAF WRATTING COMMON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER

There will be a short Service at the Memorial on Sunday 13 November at 12 noon. The Memorial is situated at Weston Woods Farm. A few of the Veterans will be attending and Cadets from 1451 (Haverhill) Squadron of the Air Training Corps will be on parade. Wreaths will be laid in memory of all those who served here and throughout the world, especially those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM. All are welcome to attend.

Dan Heath for Friends of Wratting Common
T: 01440 730192; Email rafwrattingcommon@outlook.com

VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

The new Chairman is Simon Keen. He can be contacted for matters relating to the Village Hall on hall.chairman@westwickham.org

FROM THE VICARAGE

In my letter in September, I explained the procedure for finding a new priest to serve in our group of seven village churches. That procedure is underway, and my request for people's prayers to find the right candidate is still important. In June the Archbishops' Council issued a report on the Church of England clergy numbers, showing that the numbers of clergy 'in post' were falling, although slowly. At the same time the number of retired priests is rising!

At first sight the task of serving seven churches might seem a challenging one, until you add up the population figures for the villages only to find that the total population of the group of seven is about 4,500. A typical Cambridge city parish would be about four times larger, with a greater number of people to serve. There are seven ancient buildings to care for, of course, but the good news is that many people are willing to help with caring for the churchyards, cutting the grass in summer, and cleaning and decorating the buildings with flowers week by week. As I explained in September, Julie Norris led us into a series of improvement schemes which have been completed in three of our churches, with plans underway for a fourth.

Sadly, we still have to complete the repairs to the roof of St. Andrew's, West Wrattling after the theft of lead in April. Fund-raising has been going well with some very generous contributions and grants from charities. The Church Council has set up a website for contributions on BT.com

<https://mydonate.bt.com/events/roof/363752>

The hope is that repairs can be made before the winter.

Remembrance Sunday this year will be on Sunday 13 November and we shall have the regular annual services in our churches, with a short midday open-air service at the Memorial on Wrattling Common, which has been held for many years in memory of the Bomber Command aircrews and airfield personnel who served there until 1946.

Keith Johnson

Come & meet Santa at our Christmas Fair
West Wickham Village Hall
Saturday 26th November
2pm - 4pm

face painting handmade refreshments Santa's grotto
raffle childrens craft activities tombola
cake stall chocolate fountain lucky dip

exciting gift ideas from our selection of craft stalls

All funds raised go to Daisy Chains Pre School

FIREWORK SAFETY

Fireworks and bonfires can be plenty of fun for all the family to enjoy. The Fire Service highly recommends going to an organised firework display instead of holding one at home. However, if you do use fireworks or light a bonfire at home, we would ask residents to take on board our safety advice to ensure it is just their fireworks that go off with a bang:

- Keep fireworks in a closed box and always follow the instructions.
- Light them at arms length using a taper and stand well back.
- Never go back to a lit firework.
- Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them.
- Don't light bonfires in unsuitable weather, particularly in windy conditions.
- Don't leave bonfires unattended.
- Build bonfires well clear of buildings, fences and hedges.
- Never use flammable liquids to start the fire, and never burn dangerous rubbish such as aerosols, paint, foam furniture, rubber tyres, and batteries.
- Before you light the bonfire, check that children and animals are not hiding inside and are a safe distance away.

(Ed. Please also be conscious of the wind direction. In many parts of the village there are thatched cottages that are vulnerable to fireworks and sparks from bonfires. It is also community spirited if warn your neighbours that you are having a firework party and at what time, especially neighbours who have small children or animals that might be frightened by loud bangs!)

For more information on firework and bonfire safety log on to www.cambsfire.gov.uk, follow us on social media or call 01480 444500.

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue service

WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

At the first meeting of West Wickham and District Gardening Club for 2016-2017 we were pleased to welcome Aubrey Barker from Hopley's Nursery at Much Hadham, Hertfordshire who gave us a wonderfully entertaining talk on "Bark and Berries" He had brought with him a large box of branches bearing beautiful berries of all description that he passed around the members, some of which we were unable to identify. He has 5 acres of shrubs and borders at the nursery including one of the five oldest willow trees in the country. There were cornus with strawberry fruits and multicoloured leaves and bark; a koelreuteria with huge seed pods and golden leaves; willows with red bark; rubus that have white and furry red stems; arbutus unedo, the strawberry tree; several euonymus, cotoneaster and beautiful spindles that had quite unusual bark or berries. A most enjoyable evening and if you were lucky you had the chance of buying some of these shrubs at half price.

Next month, Monday 21 November, John Walker will tell us about "Plants, Man and History" which will be a very instructive talk; he has been to talk to us before and is a most accomplished speaker. Any one wishing to join us will be very welcome and can find out more from Rosemary Yallop T: 01799584262

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The following were some of the issues discussed at the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 26 September. The draft minutes are posted on the Parish Council notice board.

Broadband. See separate item on page 1.

Highways. The County Council have done some repairs to the pavements and have replaced broken pipes on Balsham Road, south of the High Street to prevent further flooding. Flooding at the Dene Road/Mill Road/Balsham Road crossroads and the need for ditches to be cleared, were also discussed.

Speedwatch. There are now 8 trained volunteers and 3 people wishing to re-join the team.

Finance. Details of the authorised expenditure are on the draft minutes posted on the notice board.

Neighbourhood Plan. The Working Group met in September, the main topic being the Housing Needs Survey (see separate item). In future there will be a regular Newsletter sent out with the Village Voice with information on progress.

Parish Nurse Scheme. This was being promoted by local churches. West Wickham PCC had held a meeting to discuss this but it had not been well attended and the PCC had made no commitment to join the Scheme. The Parish Council wanted more clarity on the service to be provided and the costs involved.

Neighbourhood Watch. Councillor Schuilenberg has been asked by the police if the village would like to re-join the scheme. He will attend their AGM to obtain further information and report back.

Reports from District Councillors

1. Boundary Commission report due out shortly. This will involve reduction in number of SCDC Councillors from 57 to 45. The Balsham Ward will have one representative rather than the two at present.
2. There is still money available in the Community Chest; up to £1,500 per project.
3. Devolution of powers to Cambridgeshire Mayor. All Cambridgeshire Councils need to agree this. SCDC will be deciding at the end of the month.
4. There is the possibility of Parish Council precepts being capped.

The next meeting will be on Monday 28 November at 7.30 p.m. All are welcome.

Jenny Richards. Parish Clerk

T: 01223 665360; email: jrichards007@talktalk.net

LOWER WOOD WORK PARTIES

Over the winter Duncan Mackay, the volunteer warden, organises coppicing work parties in Lower Wood, Weston Colville. We meet once a month, on a Saturday morning, at 10 am. If you are interested in helping out or just having a chat and finding out what we do please come along or give me a call. You will find us somewhere along the main ride through the wood. There are usually hot drinks and biscuits on offer too. The dates for the coppicing are: 26 November, 31 December 2016; 28 January, 25 February 2017.

Melanie (291319)

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN INFORMATION NEEDED

The initial survey of residents of West Wickham showed that there were seven people living in the village who were living with others but wished to have a house of their own within the village, seven people who wished to have a smaller house in the village and four people on the housing waiting list. Anecdotal information suggests that there may be up to 30 people not currently living here who would like to live in or return to West Wickham.

Last month's newsletter contained a form that people could fill in if they wished to receive a housing needs survey. So far only two people have done so. If you are interested it is not too late. A copy of the newsletter and form can be found at <http://westwickham.org/2016/09/neighbourhood-plan-october-newsletter-correction/> or contact Trevor Hall on 290559.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

With the introduction of the two new FTTC cabinets in West Wickham, many residents are of the mistaken belief that their telephone service and existing broadband service will improve. This is **not** the case.

Your telephone service will remain on the existing copper network and **will not** improve.

Broadband speed and reliability **will not** improve *unless* you subscribe to a Superfast Broadband package (VDSL).

Should you experience poor voice quality or reliability, as well as ADSL broadband reliability or speed, it is very important that you report these faults to your provider. If possible, please can you also ask your provider for a BT OpenReach fault reference number each time and email these to me at alex@schuilenburg.org. BT OpenReach are the underlying carrier for your telephone or broadband service when it comes over a copper line. We need fault numbers to help provide a community case for an improved telephone service from BT OpenReach, and if we are to get things such as the telephone pole support cable near the Burton End/Common Road junction repaired (not scheduled for repair as part of the FTTC upgrade).

Lastly, BT OpenReach have reported that some overhanging tree branches in our parish are coming into contact with the overhead telephone cables which are causing the cables to fray, short and eventually break. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the landowner on whose property these trees are rooted to cut away these branches and ensure the cables have a clear path. If a fault occurs, the landowner may find themselves with a large bill for the repair of the line. It is not the responsibility of BT OpenReach, nor the County, District or Parish councils to clear these branches unless of course the trees are rooted in their land.

Alex Schuilenburg

PARK & RIDE BUS CHANGES

From 20 November the Babraham Park & Ride buses (PR4) will just go to the City centre and not travel on to the Grafton Centre. For this you will need to change at the City centre to the PR2 bus that goes to the Newmarket Road P&R or the PR5 bus that goes to the Milton Road P&R. The frequency remain 10 minutes.

NATURE NOTES

There can rarely have been an autumn producing so much fruit for our local and visiting populations of wildlife to feed on. Haws, hips and hops; blackberries, rowan berries, crab apples and sloes; acorns and beech nuts. The old wisdom was that such bounty presaged a hard winter but we have had so many mild, wet winters in recent years that I'm not sure anyone believes that any more. The banquet is ready and all are invited. First come, first served.

Cutting back on some of the wilder sections of our own hedge, I avoid removing the berry-bearing branches, but was making reasonable progress when a clatter of wings brought me up short. A woodpigeon flew up off its nest, revealing two eggs. I withdrew and the bird soon returned. Some days later I checked and two 'squabs' were sitting there, already looking too big for their meagre home, and they have now presumably fledged to add to the ever burgeoning woodpigeon population. Why do they do so well? They are not too choosy about what they eat, but have a liking for things we grow commercially – particularly rape, and other brassicas; they are monogamous, so do not waste time fighting over mates each year; they have a long breeding season from spring through to autumn and produce several clutches of offspring, two by two.

The woodpigeons may be taking over, but we are also beginning to notice in our garden that the moorhens are also developing a sense of entitlement. A family have bred on Guy and Liane's pond and they are a delight to watch taking an early morning stroll across the lawn and then, in un-moorhenlike fashion, flying up to the birdfeeders and balancing on the fence to take advantage of what is available.

Insects are becoming scarcer as the year progresses but as I was walking across Haverhill golf course this morning I spotted an enormous hornet on a tree. They are impressive creatures with their tawny brown and yellow colours. They make a very loud buzz, although the two I saw were silent. After last month's reference to a wasp's nest, I found another in a rabbit hole on the edge of the field bordering Blacklands Lane. Fortunately, this time the cold early morning, precluded any activity.

In contrast, we have had a week down on the South Devon coastal path; the weather was superb and we were delighted to see many butterflies. These included a number of small coppers, clouded yellow, painted lady, wall and hundreds of red admirals, all the latter in pristine condition as if they had just hatched. Most seemed to be concentrated around patches of ivy, which is a good source of nectar at this time of year.

Badgers haven't had a mention for a while but my friend Frank lent me a video of badgers he took last November on Fleam Dyke between Balsham and Fulbourn. The badgers looked cautious, but nevertheless a couple came right up to the camera, reminding us that what we see during the day is only half the story.

It's a good time of year for gathering edible mushrooms but also trying to identify the many other types of fungus, of which I am largely ignorant. A reasonably impressive flush has appeared beside the footpath in the field opposite us. Having gone through my guide book I can't really find one that fits the description, although *Lactarius Pallidus* is one possibility. Are there any fungi experts out there?

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

MEADOW SCHOOL'S 27th ANNUAL CRAFT GIFT AND FOOD FAIR

Thank you to all of you who came along and supported the Meadow School's craft, gift and food fair over the weekend of 8 and 9 October.

The craft & gift fair is a hugely successful community event hosted by the school where all of the children benefit from the proceeds. And what a success it was! We had 751 paying adults through our doors with lots of children and are on target to break all records raising well in excess of £7k which is just fantastic!

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a big thank you to all of our sponsors: ARM, Hills Residential, Camgrain, TWI, Cheffins, Haart, Cambridge Kitchens and Bathrooms, Barker Storey Matthews, Langley Larder, Structural Engineers and our local small businesses: Plumbs Dairy, Mallyon and Donaldson, The Black Bull, Mills and Saunders and Body Design Pilates. Without your backing our fair would not be the success it was.

The same also goes for our parent, ex-parent, staff and ex-staff volunteers who gave some their precious time over their weekends to come and man the Meadow stalls which as you can see makes a considerable amount of money for the school and consequently enriching the children's education and learning through new technologies.

Dates for next year's fair are 7 and 8 October. Hope to see you there.

Debbie Paton, Craft, Gift & Food Fair Organiser

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PUBLIC SURGERY IN SOUTH CAMBS

On 13 January 2017, Jason Ablewhite will be holding a public surgery from 10.00 - 12.0am at South Cambridgeshire District Council offices, Cambourne. If you have an issue you would like to discuss with him, you can book a 15 minute appointment. Please email: cambs-pcc@cambs.pnn.police.uk or phone 0300 333 3456 to speak to a member of his team. You can find more details at www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/event/surgery-south-cambridgeshire/

JOIN OUR 100 CLUB

Cambridgeshire police are looking for help from the public to get views and opinions about the force's work, policies and procedures. The force is launching the 100 Club, a virtual participation group which will allow it to get quick feedback from a cross section of the public about issues that are affecting policing and the county. The scheme is initially aiming for 100 club members but it is hoped more people will want to get involved to represent a wide cross section of all communities, faith groups, ages and nationalities.

Participants will be sent at least one short email a fortnight with information and a link to a quick survey or poll. The 100 Club will supplement other external scrutiny including a new forcewide External Ethics Committee. Anyone wishing to be part of the 100 Club should email 100Club@cambs.pnn.police.uk. They will then be sent a link to an initial short survey and signed up to the newsletter.

EVENTS IN WESTON COLVILLE

Circular Walk. October was a five-dog walk and we ventured in a new direction, towards Burrough Green and back via Carlton. Our next circular walk will be on Saturday 19 November: meet at the Reading Room at 10 o'clock, BYO lunch, and maybe something to share. You can put your lunch in the fridge before we set off, if you'd like, and refreshments will be available. Jacqueline and Alastair Douglas

T: 291475; email: jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com

Cinema Club. On Wednesday 2 November, our film will be Don't Look Now, a 1973 film directed by Nicolas Roeg, adapted from Daphne du Maurier's supernatural thriller, and starring Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie. Filmed mainly in Venice, it sets a riveting but disturbing tale of psychological turmoil against the serene and beautiful backdrop of 'La Serenissima'.

On Wednesday 6 December, we'll show Miracle on 34th Street.

Both films 7.30pm, refreshments available, all welcome. Enquiries: Jacqueline Douglas contact details above and Jeremy Newton, email: newtonjed@gmail.com



DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A SAY IN IMPROVING SERVICES FROM HEALTH OR SOCIAL CARE?

Cambridgeshire Alliance for Independent Living is a local independent charity that works to improve services by raising the voice of people living with all disabilities.

One of the ways we do this is by bringing people with all disabilities and carers (called Independent Members), Health and Social Care teams, and voluntary sector organisations (such as Age UK, Voice Ability, Cam Sight and the Carer's Trust) together at 'Partnership Board' meetings.

The Partnership Boards are opportunities for you to have your say about what is good about Health and Social Care services, such as home care and day centres, and what you would like to improve or where you would like to see changes. Recent activities by the Partnership Boards include raising concerns about Home Care, which are now being examined closely by the County Council, involvement in helping to develop a new Carers Strategy and involvement in the process for choosing organisations to run Carers Services.

Interested in getting involved? We are looking for new Independent Members to join our boards. We offer full training and support, out of pocket expenses and reimbursement of travel. If you think this could be you, please contact Leisha O'Brien, Development Officer at Cambridgeshire Alliance for Independent Living by phoning 0300 111 2301 or email leisha@cambridgeshirealliance.org.uk

To find out more, take a look at Partnership Board pages on our website www.cambridgeshirealliance.org.uk

BALSHAM COMMUNITY MARKET IS COMING TO TOWN

The first ever Balsham Community Market is nearly here! Doors open from 2pm till 5pm on Saturday 12 November in the Balsham Church Institute. It is free entry to come and shop at the 12 food stalls.

The core aim of the market is to connect our community with local farmers and food producers who will bring to you seasonal, tasty, locally grown and homemade foods. We have CamCattle, CamLamb; The Radwinter Wild Game Company; Parkins Farm Butchers with their pork sausages; The Wild Flour Kitchen selling mouth-watering savoury foods as well as pre-made meals, Borakis Greek Foods selling their finest olives, oils, honey, delight, vinegars all imported from Crete; Nikki Booth Homemade Preserves; CB21 Cheesecake Co/Chocs Away; Big Sky Cakes, Plumbs Dairy and Spoonstruck with their delicious artisan ice creams and sorbets.

Do you have any surplus, vegetables, fruit, honey, eggs? Please get in touch as there is an allotment/produce table in which we can sell on your behalf.

Su Wright will be running the small café selling cream teas and other delectable delights with tea, hot chocolate and freshly made coffee.

Do come along and support your new community market and help reduce food miles, get to know where your food comes from, meet the people who make and grow the food and best and more importantly of all: buy fresh, tasty, local, seasonal produce.

Remember to Shop Fresh! Shop Local! Support our Community!

Debbie Paton, email: balshammarket@gmail.com



EAT LOCAL
get closer to your food

Balsham Community Market

Balsham Institute

First Market: 12th November

And every second Saturday,
every second month thereafter

2pm ~ 5pm

2017 dates:

14th January, 11th March, 13th May, 8th July,
9th September & 11th November

balshammarket@gmail.com

[balshammarket](https://www.facebook.com/balshammarket)

MEADOW SCHOOL NEWS

We have been incredibly lucky as my plea in the last edition asked for any people with a spare hour to come in and hear readers. We now have 3 willing volunteers signed up and ready to go and the teachers are fighting over them and their generous time. However we still have room for a lot more! We are particularly looking for any one who could help with a gardening club and a chess club one lunchtime a week. If you have some time to spare please do get in touch with the school office.

Since my last update so many more things have happened; We hosted our welcome meetings and after the 'meet the teacher' and 'see the classroom' opportunity, the parents were invited back to the hall to listen to a talk on the importance of reading aloud with children of all ages and reading together with Ruth Keys, Librarian from our partner academy school, LVC. A great example of collaborative learning between two schools keen to promote reading for pleasure.

We heard some great news in October; our Year 6 team won their heat at the Year 6 English Challenge and now go to Ely Cathedral in December to the grand finals. We also achieved Silver in the School Games awards. This is the first year we have entered and submitted supporting evidence and were delighted that our sporting efforts were recognised.

We were also successful in our bid for just over £3000 to make our Forest School area dream a reality. Thank you to the Cambridge Community Foundation and Wadlow Windfarm. The wellie racks have been ordered, the fire pit is about to go in and already the children have been having a great time exploring the area. We may be on the lookout for some long sticks/branches to make dens with – if you have you any would be happy to part with, please get in touch.

October was also a very busy month with our annual events. The first was the Meadow Mile, a sponsored event which saw the children walk a mile around the Rec to raise money for school funds to help pay for things like their enrichment programme and whole school trips. This year our dress up theme linked to our current whole school topic – books. The second event was the Craft Fair, which was organised so brilliantly by Mrs Debbie Paton. It was Debbie's final year organising the fair and she certainly made it the best ever! We had more stalls and variety than ever before and we certainly served more tea and cake than we imagined possible. A huge thank you to everyone who came and visited over the weekend and helped us to be so successful. We hope to see you all again next year!

Another annual event, although not one of ours, was the annual beer festival organised by The Chestnut Pub in West Wrattling. This year they chose The Meadow as its charity to support. They raised over £1500 for the swimming pool fund with the help of their very generous (and thirsty!) locals. Thank you so much.

With our budgets in Cambridgeshire remaining so poor and the new funding formulae being delayed for another year, we really do rely upon our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to help provide an enriching curriculum and plenty of exciting opportunities throughout the year. Money raised at these events will also help to pay off a significant portion of the cost of the new invaluable interactive screens we had installed in each classroom last year.

Nichola Connor, Headteacher

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Linton & District Branch

COFFEE MORNING

11am – 12.30pm, Friday 11 November
at Mulberry Cottage, Fox Road, Balsham

Christmas cards & wrapping paper & "Bring & Buy"
Raffle £1.00 entry

Look forward to seeing you

LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE NEWS

I wholeheartedly believe in comprehensive education, in all senses of the word. In my recent conversations with prospective parents I have made a strong point of emphasising that, at LVC, we are committed to offering a broad and balanced education, one that is comprehensive in its scope and influence.

A comprehensive curriculum goes beyond subject specifications; it teaches children wider, formative lessons. In addition to knowledge and skills, it enables them to develop relationships, tolerance and respect for those similar to, as well as different from, themselves.

Recent government proposals shine a disparaging light on comprehensive schooling. The green paper's fundamental premise is that 'schools that work for everyone' depend on selective practices. It assumes that it is possible and preferable to categorise learners aged 11 on the basis of their academic performance in a standalone test will be advantageous for all.

I was fortunate to sit alongside our MP, Lucy Frazer, recently judging LVC's debating team. The children had been given the topic of discussing grammar schools as part of a regional debating competition. I was impressed by the quality of the arguments and rebuttals posed eloquently and, quite ironically, given the number of students that probably would not have passed the 11 plus test. The prospect of creaming off our highest performing applicants, expecting others to seek education elsewhere and promising higher educational performance as a result of this brutal academic division sickened me somewhat.

And yet the very thing that we hold dear at Linton Village College, as a fundamental facet of equitable education, is at risk of being undermined. I am proud of our comprehensive intake and of our excellent standards of education for all.

Spending vast amounts of money on converting schools or opening up new ones to serve the needs of the 'most able' seems rather frivolous, unnecessary and does not address the real challenges that need tackling in education to secure its future.

'Comprehensive' isn't just a title that replaces 'secondary modern', it represents an ethical stand point and a philosophy about the importance of a diverse and rich education. It is a concept that I hold dear and will fight to preserve and celebrate.

Helena Marsh, Principal

PRESS DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 16 November

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