

# VILLAGE VOICE

NEWS FROM WEST WICKHAM & STREETLY END

MARCH 2017

ISSUE 167

## VILLAGE DIARY

- Wed 1 Ash Wednesday Holy Communion. 10.30, Balsham Church  
Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Sun 5 All ages praise. 9.30, St Mary's Church
- Mon 6 **Blue & green wheeled bin collection (remember the new collection day!)**
- Sat 11 **Balsham Community Market. See page 2**
- Sun 12 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
- Mon 13 **Black wheeled bin collection Local History Club AGM. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
- Wed 15 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Thur 16 **Deadline for items to go in the April issue of the Village Voice**
- Sun 19 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church  
**VILLAGE CLEAN UP. See page 1**
- Mon 20 **Blue & green wheeled bin collection Gardening Club. How to grow dahlias. Talk by Rob & Denise Sherriff. 7.30pm, Village Hall**
- Wed 22 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
- Fri 24 **Meadow School PTA Quiz. See page 5**
- Sat 25 **HUB NIGHT. See page 1**
- Sun 26 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
- Mon 27 **Black wheeled bin collection Parish Council Meeting. 7.30pm, Village Hall. All are welcome to attend**

### 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
Children's party	£30.00 daytime £43.00 evening
Adult's party/disco	£60.00

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

Email: [bookings@westwickham.org](mailto:bookings@westwickham.org)  
or visit [www.westwickham.org](http://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.

## VILLAGE CLEAN-UP

SUNDAY 19 MARCH

PLEASE COME ALONG AND HELP

I think everyone would agree that the roadside verges and footways have more than their fair share of litter this year, thanks in the main to passing motorists, but probably supplemented by detritus arising from the work being done by Open Reach over the last few months. So anyone who would like to take part in our annual clean-up of the village on that day please come to the Village Hall car park at 11.00 a.m. where grabbers, gloves and refuse bags will be provided. If you would like to help out and beat the record for the number of bags we collect, it is advisable to wear bright clothing.

Peter Grieve T: 290503

COME AND JOIN US AT OUR FIRST VILLAGE

★ HUB NIGHT! ★

COMMUNITY PUB



SATURDAY  
**25.03.17**  
7PM – 11PM

WEST WICKHAM  
HUB  
VILLAGE NIGHT

## WELL STOCKED CHARITY BAR

Locally brewed beer & locally made bar snacks.

You are also welcome to bring your own drinks and make a donation.

MUSIC | DARTS | TRADITIONAL BAR GAMES

West Wickham Hub Nights will happen the fourth Saturday of every month.

**NEXT HUB NIGHT: 22.04.17**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEWS

**Housing Needs Survey.** The Survey forms were distributed to each household in the parish by members of the Working Group during January and February. A total of 172 survey forms were delivered and by 16 February 115 had been completed and handed in, this is a return of nearly 67%. The completed forms have been sent to ACRE for evaluation and it is hoped that the results will be available in mid March. If you still have a completed form to hand in please place it in the post box in the old telephone box in West Wickham or drop it into the letterbox at 49 Burton End.

**Working Group Meeting.** A brief meeting of the Group was held on 14 February. It was agreed at the meeting that the next activity for the Working Group will be to carry out a Character Assessment of the parish. This will help to develop a policy in the Plan that will provide guidance on the nature of any future development; this will have special regard to size, materials and character. Should anyone like to volunteer for this activity please contact Janet Morris on 290863 or Trevor Hall on 290559 or drop a note in the letterbox inside the High Street telephone box.

Trevor Hall

## COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS VOLUNTEER SCHEME

The County Council is promoting this scheme, hoping that voluntary groups in villages and city wards will help to cut down Council costs by carrying out work such as cutting back vegetation, cleaning road signs, and cleaning and clearing pavements (and collecting litter as above). Please let me know if you would like to be part of such a voluntary team, although there is nothing to stop individuals doing something like this on their own initiative. However the County Council would like voluntary groups to be registered and be told when any work has been done.

Peter Grieve T: 290503

\* Eat Well   \* Live Well   \* Celebrate Community



**EAT LOCAL**  
get closer to your food

## Balsham Community Market

**Bringing Food & Friends Together**

**Saturday 11th March 2017**  
**2pm to 4.30pm**

**Balsham Institute**  
Beef, lamb, sausages, wild game,  
bread, savoury foods, cheese,  
preserves, cakes, chocolates,  
Greek foods, dairy, juices, wild bird  
food, fresh produce plus much more.  
Café - homemade cakes, cream teas

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## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the meeting held on 23 January the following items were issues which were discussed. The draft Minutes are available on the notice board by Platts Farm.

*Matters arising:*

1. Dean Road hedging and the grips at the West Wickham cross roads – nothing has been done yet and it will be raised at the Parish Forum meeting on 25 January.  
(Ed. The grips have now been done)
2. Signage repairs: Again nothing yet done and will be raised on 25 January.
3. Pavements: The roads have been swept but the County Council Highways Dept will not be sweeping the pavements. A Community Volunteer scheme to organise volunteers to sweep the pavements when necessary and a similar scheme for cutting back hedging and lopping overhanging branches was suggested. See left.

*Finances:* The budget and precept were set for 2017/18: The Chairman felt that it was unnecessary to increase the precept this year and it was agreed and voted on that it remain at £11,000. The budget was discussed and it was agreed that £1000 would be allocated as a contribution to a Parish Speed Indicator.

*Neighbourhood Plan:* 31 residents had attended the Drop-in meeting on 14 January.

*Maintenance:*

1. Gritting: The fact that Councillors had been out gritting the pavements had been noticed and appreciated. 2 more yellow grit bins were needed, one for Streetly End and the other at the junction by the Post Box and these will be ordered. An item will go into Village Voice asking for volunteers to help, particularly in Streetly End.
2. Speed Indicator: Cllr. Hall had looked into the cost to be shared with Shudy Camps, Castle Camps and Balsham which would be approx £1000 per village, this had been allocated in the Budget. It will be discussed with the other parishes involved at the Parish Forum.
3. Flooding: Cllr. Hall has written a letter to landowners pointing out the problems of flooding roads which turn to ice in winter when ditches on their land are not cleaned out. Also included was a pamphlet put out by the County Council on "The rights and responsibilities of a riparian owner".
4. Village Sign: This needs some repair work doing to its base where the brick work is breaking up. Tom Licence will be asked to look at this

*Parish Nurse:* Cllr. Licence said the cost of employing a Parish Nurse for the seven parishes was £66,000 to cover a period of 3 years. It was agreed to leave any decision for the present.

*Report by Dist.Cllr. Fraser:*

1. South Cambs DC have set up a housing company called Ermine Street Scheme, buying property which is let out on the commercial market. This generated a £50,000 contribution towards council services this year. 150 houses have now been purchased.
2. City Deal. There are plans to have a corridor between Haverhill to Cambridge to include a bus priority route and to provide a Park & Ride site at Four Wentways.

**The next meeting will be held on Monday 27 March.**  
**All are welcome.**

Jenny Richards, Parish Clerk. T: 01223 665260

## BROADBAND UPDATE

Unfortunately BT OpenReach have remained true to form and there are further delays with the cabinet at Burton End (designated West Wratting 5) being ready for Superfast broadband orders. The earliest date provided by Connecting Cambridgeshire for this is now early March. To keep updated on progress and receive a notification when the cabinet goes "live" (open for orders), send an empty message to <broadband-request@westwickham.org> with the subject "subscribe" to subscribe to the resident's only Village Broadband subscription list.

On the positive side, the cabinet on the Common Road (designated West Wratting 1) went live for FTTP (Superfast broadband delivered into your property over fibre) orders for residents at the top of Burton End around the 15 February. This was unknown to Connecting Cambridgeshire and unannounced by BT OpenReach. Please go to <https://www.dslchecker.bt.com> and enter your phone number to check whether FTTP is available to you. You will see WBC FTTP in the list of featured products.

FTTP provides a lossless and reliable medium for broadband connectivity and while not all ISPs provide FTTP, the monthly cost is comparable to FTTC (even cheaper if bundled with line rental with certain ISPs). BT are not the only provider of FTTP Superfast broadband, so please shop around for an ISP that will fit your pocket while providing you with a decent customer service. Ask around (neighbours/friends/etc) for personal recommendations.

The delay to cabinet 5 is due to the need to replace some of the telephone poles because of concerns about the additional weight of the fibre cables and the additional copper bundles. Yes, new copper cables are being brought into West Wickham, although it is not known whether this is to increase the number of lines or replace some of the faulty lines.

The commissioning of cabinet 7 opposite the Village Hall, which went "live" in early January, was unfortunately not a smooth process for the majority of residents. However, I am pleased to report all issues reported to me have finally been resolved.

Please continue to report issues to your ISPs and/or telephone provider, regardless of which cabinet you are being connected to, and let me know if possible since Lucy Frazer, our local MP, has become involved. To inform Lucy Frazer directly, please email your details to Rachel Jeffery, part of Lucy's team, at [rachel.jeffery@parliament.uk](mailto:rachel.jeffery@parliament.uk). You will also need to provide your consent for Lucy to act on your behalf.

I also advise you to go to <http://speedtest.btwholesale.com> and follow the instructions to run the performance test if you think you are having problems with your broadband (ADSL/FTTC/FTTP). If a fault within BT OpenReach's network exists, this test will help diagnose the issue and eliminate network contention issues - we all share the fibre optic cable from the cabinets back to the West Wratting exchange, so during periods of heavier "village" use your speeds will be slower. Take note of any fault numbers reported and provide these to your ISP when reporting these faults.

Alex Schuilenburg

## NATURE NOTES

Our roads and settlements are human constructions, but they have been imposed on a pre-existing world of animals, and it's nice sometimes to be reminded of this, as Sue and I were the other evening when driving back home after the Local History Club and we had to slow down for a young badger who was trundling across the road from April Cottage to the White Hart. (No chance of a pint – they closed 60 years ago). Apparently they are regular visitors to April Cottage, clearing up under the bird feeders to take advantage of human generosity. Sadly I have also noticed two dead cousins of this local resident on the roads recently. Following Trevor's lead, I have erected a trail cam to find out a bit more about what goes on during the hours of darkness, and have been rewarded with numerous pictures of a fox (or foxes) going backwards and forwards at the bottom of our garden. Fortunately it was during the hours when the chickens were locked safely away. I'm hoping that some other creatures will walk past the camera one of these days – maybe a hare, as we are now in the season of madness and I have noticed a couple in fields recently, although still apparently sane.

We are on the verge of spring and things are on the move. Robins have been seen pairing up instead of sparring aggressively – in Di's garden and Len's allotment; Connie reports blue tits investigating the nest box; collared doves are promenading in pairs. Di's robins have been running rings round a blackbird over the meal worms that have been put out. One attracts its attention while the other grabs the prize. Meanwhile up in the trees some bird species have begun singing – notably the song thrush which can be heard most mornings, high in a tree at the Old Vicarage, but Di also reports great tits and chaffinches in full voice. I haven't heard a blackbird's song yet this year – perhaps because a lot of the blackbirds around at present are still the winter visitors from northern Europe.

The early plants have been coming into flower – there are some wonderful displays of snowdrops and winter aconites to be seen locally, although by the time you read this they may be nearly over. Good places to see them are at Wandlebury, in the woods beside the river near Hildersham, at Fulbourn Fen nature reserve and locally alongside Dean Road. Di has also seen violets and primroses out in some sheltered spots.

I hope a few people in the village did the Big Garden Birdwatch at the end of January and perhaps had one or two unusual visitors. There have been some unusual 'spots' this month. Di and Steve saw a pair of stonechats up by the warehouse, a heron sits in the field behind Ann's house and Connie has seen a fieldfare in her garden. Mick informed me that the little egret is still around near the Roman Road and he spotted it recently standing within a few yards of a buzzard. The two were facing in opposite directions taking no notice of each other, like two embarrassed people waiting at a bus stop. A disappointment for me on the day of the BGB was the lack of long-tailed tits. Last week they made up for it as eight of them completely covered the nut feeder like a swarm of feathery insects.

March is a time with so much to look forward to, so let me know if you see the first brimstone butterfly, or hear the first chiffchaff or find frogspawn in your pond.

Peter Grieve. T: 290503, email: [mail@petergrieve.co.uk](mailto:mail@petergrieve.co.uk)

## GRANTA MEDICAL PRACTICES AND BARLEY PRACTICE PLAN TO MERGE IN APRIL

The Partners of Granta Medical Practices and Barley Practice have taken the decision to merge the two partnerships. On 1 April the Partners intend to merge the contracts too. Both Granta and Barley are strong practices and very well respected in the local health community; the merger will build on that strength and ensure patients continue to receive the best possible service in the future.

Granta and Barley deliver services to around 26,000 patients and 7215 patients respectively. We have been in discussions together for the last two years about how we can meet the challenge of improving healthcare with the problems facing the NHS at the moment. The merger of Sawston and Linton has enabled us to recruit 2 Emergency Care Practitioners (paramedics), helping us improve care to the frail and elderly in their homes. Working with South Cambridgeshire District Council we are about to have patient advocates in the practices to assist patients to get access to all the community services available. The Mental Health trusts are placing Community Psychiatric Nurses in the practices giving our patients direct access to these services. These are just a few of the services we will now be able to offer directly rather than referring to other organisations. Granta will be the first Primary Care Home in the region. This will mean that community services will begin to be delivered directly through the practice rather than through another agency or secondary care. This is not a cost saving exercise: there will be no reduction in staffing levels and in fact all partners are investing in this merger as a means of building on the services we provide to our patients and securing a strong future for general practice in South Cambs.

Initially, we suspect that patients will notice very little difference! Patients will be able to choose to attend any site. All sites will continue to provide all the current services for patients and, over time, we hope to be able to provide more services shared between the sites. An example would be extended 8-8 opening hours: neither practice could comfortably offer such extended hours alone, but together that becomes more feasible and is certainly a better option than having to travel to Chesterton for out-of-hours care or to Stevenage for the Barley patients. There are many opportunities for the future, but in the very short term the aim is to secure a sustainable future for delivering GP services to both Granta and Barley patients.

On 26 April the patients' records and computer system will merge and this will require both practices to close from 1pm on 25 April and open again at 1pm on 26 April. The out of hours service will be available to our patients during this time.

As always, we appreciate the support and interest of our patients and both Practice Managers are very happy to respond to your comments.

Gerard Newnham  
Granta Medical Practices

Nikki Foster  
Barley Practice

**DON'T FORGET - THE BIN COLLECTION  
DAY HAS CHANGED TO MONDAYS, SEE  
THE VILLAGE DIARY**

## NEEDED – SOMEONE TO DELIVER THE VILLAGE VOICE IN STREETLY END

Jon & Anita Debnam are shortly off on extended travels around the UK by narrow boat. We wish them well with their adventures and thank them for many years of delivering the Village Voice in Streetly End.

Consequently we need someone to take this vital job on from the April issue. If you think you can help and would like to know more please contact Andrew Morris on 290863.

## WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

On Monday 20 February the Club enjoyed a talk on *Wildflowers of Britain* by Barry Gayton which he illustrated with his own photographs. We had been let down by our speaker at the last moment and Barry very kindly agreed to take his place. He is an enthusiastic speaker with a wide knowledge of plants, wild and cultivated. His own garden in Brandon, developed over 30 years or more has one and a half acres of trees, shrubs and borders, along with many glasshouses containing cacti and hothouse plants which he opens to the public during the year. Our talk on 20 March will be *How to grow dahlias* by Rob and Denise Sherriff. They will bring dahlias for sale so don't forget to put some money in your pocket.

The beginning of March is when we can begin to look forward to another gardening year. Our Club members will be sowing vegetable and flower seeds and potting up a variety of plants for our Sale on Saturday 20 May, so please keep that in mind. Further info from Rosemary Yallop 01799584262.

## WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY CLUB

You can now follow our community archaeology project on: <https://westwickhambigdig.wordpress.com>

You will find the results of our previous digs plus photos. Check Latest News for 2016 results and 3D views of the test pits. Dig4 will take place over the weekend of 15/16 July. Volunteer now.

Janet Morris

Tel: 290863, Email: [jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com](mailto:jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com)

## SMALL MARQUEE AVAILABLE FOR VILLAGE EVENTS

Thank you to Graeme Jenkins, through whom we have acquired a small marquee (4 x 6 metres) for use at village events. We are working out where to store it but if in the meantime anyone wishes to use it please contact Andrew Morris on 290863.

## WESTON COLVILLE CINEMA CLUB

On 1 March, the film will be *The Draughtsman's Contract*. On 29 March the film will be *Possession*. Both films will be shown in the Reading Room, 7.30pm, pre-screening talk, refreshments available, all welcome.

Enquiries: Jacqueline Douglas 291475  
[jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com](mailto:jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com) and Jeremy Newton  
[newtonjed@gmail.com](mailto:newtonjed@gmail.com)

## BE SAFE AND WELL

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service are committed to supporting the safety and wellbeing of residents in all of the communities that we serve. Safe and Well Visits and Home fire safety checks are available to those who are most vulnerable in our community. This may include those who smoke, have a disability or mental health problems and are prioritised according to individual risk.

The Safe and Well visit will provide us with sufficient information to support you and, with your permission, refer you to selected partner agencies who will be able to support you further. We will not share your data with marketing companies or for other purposes. Our visit will last no longer than 60 minutes and is completely FREE of charge. Our visit will assess five key elements:

1. Fire safety in the home - including cooking, general safety and escape plans.
2. Falls prevention - including simple remedial action such as replacing lightbulbs or taping down loose carpet.
3. Alcohol use - Alcohol related illness in the over 65s is on the increase. We can provide you with helpful information.
4. Stay well and warm - Can you afford to heat your home? Do you have access to a hot meal? Do you have access to all the services available to you?
5. Crime reduction - We can provide advice on making your home more secure in addition to advice to make you less vulnerable to scams or fraud.

You are under no obligation to answer any questions that you do not want to, but the more information you provide us with, the better we will be able to support you. We can also provide advice in relation to promoting the health and safety of individuals with hoarding concerns, as well as providing valuable information to care providers.

You can find out if you or a family member or friend are likely to be eligible for a free home fire safety check by completing a short online questionnaire. Go to [www.cambsfire.gov.uk](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk) and search for "Safe and Well". Alternatively, if you are unable to apply online or have a query about an enquiry form that has already been submitted, please telephone 0800 917 9994, open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

## FROM THE VICARAGE

1 March is Ash Wednesday and we will be holding Ash Wednesday services at 10.30 am at Holy Trinity, Balsham and in the evening at 7.30 pm at Holy Trinity, Hildersham. Ely Diocese has posted online a five session Lent Course, with a booklet that can be downloaded, together with music on Youtube and recorded testimonies on the website itself [www.elydiocese.org/worship-and-services/lent17](http://www.elydiocese.org/worship-and-services/lent17) so our diocese can be said to have embraced the digital age! As we are in the vacancy period, I recommend that we all use the Diocesan Lent Course as a resource this year, either as individuals or in small groups.

This month sees the completion of our Parish Profile which is to be sent to all clergy who are considering applying for the post of our Parish Priest. Copies have been placed in all our churches. Under the rules of the diocese we have had to put forward a new name for our group of seven churches, and we are now to be called the Granta Vale Group of churches. As I have said in a previous letter, please do pray for the right priest to be appointed to be our new pastor. Your prayers are really important.

The first Friday in March every year is the Women's World Day of Prayer. This year's event has been prepared by the women of the Philippine churches, which promises to be a lively event. Our service will be on Friday 3 March at 10.30 am at Holy Trinity, Hildersham.

Bishop Stephen Conway, the Bishop of Ely, will be coming to preach at St. Mary's Great Abington at 3.00 pm on Sunday 19 March. This will be a Festal Evensong for the Rededication of St. Mary's now that the new kitchen and conveniences are completed. The date, 19 March, is really appropriate as it is the Feast of St. Joseph. Joseph was not just a carpenter. He was Nazareth's house builder and ran a business in the High Street, now converted into a church!

Mothering Sunday this year will be on 26 March, and for those of us who have recovered from St. Valentine's Day, there will be a new set of emotions to enjoy, as we all give thanks for our mothers and for all they have done for us!

Finally good news from West Wrating! St. Andrew's church is now under a huge scaffolding roof as the work of repairing the damage done by the lead thieves last April is now underway. Our thanks are due to all the generous charities who have made donations and especially to those generous individuals who have given to the repair fund since last April.

Keith Johnson



MEADOW SCHOOL  
PTA  
**Quiz NIGHT**

FRIDAY  
24.03.17  
DOORS: 7:00PM  
START: 7:30PM

BAR  
RAFFLE  
TICKETS £10

FISH & CHIP SUPPER\*  
FIRST DRINK INCLUDED

Tickets available from  
Meadow School: **01223 894 400**



Granta Deanery  
**Spring Fair**  
Saturday 4 March 10.00-12.00  
Great Shelford Memorial Hall

Cakes Produce White Elephant Toys Jigsaws  
Raffle China Glass  
Gifts Card & Craft Tombola Refreshments  
Wide Range of Books

Entrance: Adults 50p Children Free

Supporting the Churches' work for  
village communities in South Cambridgeshire  
Registered Charity No: 245456

## MEADOW SCHOOL NEWS

Ever heard the phrase, 'Be careful what you wish for'? Well we experienced this recently when we received 'the call' at lunchtime on a Wednesday from Ofsted to say they were coming the next day for a 2 day inspection. As we had been waiting for this we immediately put our plan into action. The staff were amazing, rallying around to support each other, checking everything was tidy, helping each other to set up classrooms for the following day, gathering evidence ready and checking all of displays were looking super smart. We all had takeaway together on the Wednesday evening to settle nerves and then people started to drift away late in the evening.

Ofsted inspections can make or break a school and the people who work within it. When your school has been in Special Measures, you are being judged constantly and you know how much it means to the community and the staff to prove how much things have changed so an inspection is perhaps even more high stakes and pressurised. We had a team of 3 inspectors, who were all Secondary School specialists, not ideal for a Primary School I have to say. This added to the new far tougher inspection framework that was introduced last year, provided 2 days of extreme challenge. I won't lie; the pressure we were all under for the 48 hours was like nothing I have experienced before and knowing that people can and do lose their jobs if things don't go well was a hard thing to put to the back of your mind. The desire of each and every member of the staff team to show off what we have achieved was evident and the team effort was absolutely amazing. We were very well supported by our parental community too and inundated with cakes and food to keep us going as we worked a couple of ridiculously long days.

What I am immensely proud of is that we kept our promise of doing things for us and our children and not for Ofsted. There was no show put on that we would struggle to maintain for 2 days. We still did Forest School and trailed mud through school, we carried on as normal. We stuck to what we believe in and practice on a daily base. We were confident in these beliefs and morals and our passion for learning was clear. The children were fantastic ambassadors and also made no exceptions for the inspectors, there was absolutely no preferential treatment given in the lunch queue and the memory of the child who was incredibly sick at the feet of an inspector shall forever stay with me!

There are always going to be things that schools need to work on and anyone who thinks differently is not being honest. The problems arise when you aren't aware of these things. We have a very detailed School Improvement Plan that we write and develop each year in line with our school priorities.

I couldn't be prouder of everyone. I genuinely love my job and feel privileged to work with such a talented team and fantastic children and families. A huge thank you to the whole community for all of your support over these past few years. As I write this we are still awaiting our official report and I am unable to share the judgements with the staff (still!) or community. As soon as I am able to share the news I will!

We share photos and news of everything that happens at The Meadow on our twitter page, @Meadow\_Balsham.

Nichola Connor, Headteacher

## LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE NEWS

8 March marks International Women's Day, a calendar event more commonly celebrated in other European countries. While some may question the ongoing necessity of such a day, the fact that we still witness women being denied equal rights and opportunities on account of their gender suggests that there remain equality issues that need addressing.

This year's theme, 'Be Bold for Change', is a plea for action to quash and challenge practices, laws and customs that prevent women from living full and equal lives. While it may be easy to cite international examples in which women are the victims of unfair treatment, there are also causes closer to home.

Recent gender pay gap research confirms that despite girls traditionally outperforming boys in examinations and greater numbers of women entering higher education, after a short period in their early careers, pay and promotion are very unequal for most of women's working lives. Furthermore, Harvard Business Journal highlights that only 24% of senior management roles are held by women and only 5% of executive positions. These stark statistics seem quite incongruous in 2017, as does the concept that women are literally 'worth less' in terms of an hourly pay rate.

The gender gap has dramatically narrowed at LVC. In 2016, boys' academic performance was equally matched to girls, unlike previous cohorts. Despite the results showing parity between the sexes, the profile of intervention groups appeared to confirm entrenched gender stereotypes: pockets of girls deficient in confidence and self-esteem and some boys lacking intrinsic motivation and work ethic.

Despite much progress being made in terms of gender equality, there is still work to do to counter fixed mind-sets and barriers, for the benefit of both sexes. Pervasive views about 'laddish' and 'girly' behaviours, excusatory phrases such as 'boys will be boys' and notions of 'girls' subjects' and career paths need tackling too.

While gender has become a more fluid notion in modern day society, the ambition for all people to have the opportunity to be happy and successful remains a central motivation for schooling and one that over 50 teachers meeting at LVC on 8 March will be championing.

Helena Marsh, Executive Principal

## DAWN HOUSDEN

Just to say thank you to my many friends from Streetly End and West Wickham for the Sympathy Cards and words of comfort received following the loss of Dawn. Your support and words were of much help during this difficult period. Thank you all.

Malcolm Mizon

### PRESS DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 16 March

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