

VILLAGE VOICE

NEWS FROM WEST WICKHAM & STREETLY END

OCTOBER 2019

ISSUE 197

VILLAGE DIARY

- Wed 2 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sun 6 **United parishes service. 10.30, Balsham Church. Hosted by West Wickham with the collection going to Arthur Rank House**
Mon 7 Black wheeled bin collection
Village Hall AGM. 7.30pm, Village Hall
Wed 9 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sun 13 **Harvest festival service. 9.15, St Mary's Church**
Mon 14 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
Local History Club. Bassingbourn. Talk by Valory Hurst. 7.30pm, Village Hall
Wed 16 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Deadline for items to be included in the November edition of the Village Voice
Sun 20 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Mon 21 Black wheeled bin collection
Gardening Club. Hostas. Talk by Melanie Collins of Mickfield Hostas, Stowmarket. 7.30pm, Village Hall
Wed 23 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall
Sat 26 **HUB NIGHT. 7 – 11pm Village Hall**
Sun 27 Holy Communion. 9.15, St Mary's Church
Mon 28 Blue & green wheeled bin collection
Wed 30 Carpet Bowls Club. 7pm, Village Hall

Daisy Chains Pre-School meets

Monday & Wednesday 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
Wedding reception	£150.00

To book the Village Hall contact Georgina Magin

Email: bookings@westwickham.org

visit www.westwickham.org

or T: 01223 290972

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.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GREEN SPACE CONSULTATION

Thank you to those who have completed and returned the Green Spaces Consultation questionnaire for our Neighbourhood Plan. Your answers and comments are important in making sure the Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of the community. The questionnaire results will be published by the end of the year.

It isn't too late to return your completed survey to 17 Burton End or to a Neighbourhood Plan post box in either of the red telephone boxes. All responses received before 7 October will be included. Please contact Andrew Morris on 290863 if you need a replacement questionnaire or to have the form collected.

Dave Sargeant, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

WEST WICKHAM VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

The Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Trust is to be held on **Monday 7 October at 7.30 p.m.** Everyone who lives in the village is invited to attend.

The Hall is managed by a committee, which includes representatives of the Parish Council and user groups, and other individuals who can be elected at the AGM. There are usually four meetings of the Committee each year. If you would be interested in being on the Village Hall Committee please let one of the Committee members know on the email address below and we can outline what is involved. Our Village Hall is a great local asset so we must ensure that it continues to be well run and maintained. The members of the committee are: Simon Keen (currently Chairman), Peter Grieve, Sue Harrow, Di Licence, Georgina Magin (Booking Secretary), Brian Marshall (Treasurer), Jane Scheuer, Alex Schuilenburg and Brian Upton.

Email: hall_committee@westwickham.org

HAVERHILL FOOD BANK

In the Church Porch and in the entrance to the Village Hall is a basket for Reach, the Haverhill Food Bank. They are desperate for donations and any non perishables and tinned food would be greatly appreciated. On the shopping list are: small jars of coffee, teabags, sugar, long life juice/milk, biscuits, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, tinned meat/fish, tinned sponge pudding, instant mash potatoes, custard.

Nicky Cornish

POOR MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION

Some residents are still experiencing issues with mobile phone reception, particularly in Streetly End, despite improvements reportedly being made in 2017. In order to address this issue with the mobile phone providers and strengthen our case for improved mobile phone coverage in our parish, our MP Lucy Frazer, is collating a list of residents who are still having issues.

Continued on page 2

Poor mobile phone reception continued

This will be passed onto the providers to help them understand better where the remaining problem areas are.

If you are still having issues with mobile phone reception in our parish, please email your address (or just postcode if you prefer) along with the name of your mobile phone provider to one of Lucy's team, Rachel Jeffery at rachel.jeffery@parliament.uk. If you prefer, you can also email me at alex@schuilenburg.org.

Alex Schuilenburg

CHURCH FETE

Fortunately again the weather stayed fine and the new addition of a Dog Show seemed very popular. Particular thanks go to Poppy Tunstill from her Vets practice in Newmarket for judging and to Lynn Dicks for organising the races and Jake Bevan and his helpers for the music.



Competitors in the owner most like his/her dog competition.
Photograph Louise Salter

We made £1281.76 on the day and £1355 in donations so our total was £2636.76. A big thank you to those who donated cash; it more than doubled the takings on the day.

Finally a huge thank you to all those helpers for running a stall or game, helping set up and clear up at the end of the day and to those who donated bottles, raffle prizes, produce, books and bric a brac

Godfrey & Jenny Dutton who ran the raffle would also like to add their sincerest thanks.

Nicky Cornish PCC Secretary

A1307

The next upgrades of the A1307 improvements have begun. Providing a new bus lane leading into Linton from Dalehead Foods started on September 16 and will run until early December. Whilst the work is happening one lane will be closed and the other lane will have a 40mph reduction in place. This could cause some delays, so plan ahead. The works will also include the upgrading of the foot/cycle path running alongside the road, some surfacing on the central reservation and the permanent altering of the speed limits to 40 and 50mph.

Henry Batchelor, County Councillor

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE VILLAGE IN WHICH YOU LIVE?

Do you wonder how it came to be where it is, the shape it is, how old it is, why it is farmed like it is? Do you want to know about your house and who lived in it? Do you want to know why there is a church, a chapel, a school, a windmill? Do you want to know more about neighbouring villages, the district and the county in which we live?

If the answer is yes to any of these or just because you would like to support a village club and get to know other villagers then do come along to meetings of **West Wickham & District Local History Club**. We very much need your support.

We start our autumn programme on Monday 14 October (7.30pm in the Village Hall) with a talk about Bassingbourn by Valory Hurst – a village slightly out of our area but it is good to see what research others are doing. Other talks lined up (all on the 2nd Monday of the month) are Seppe Casseteri on the Balsham Map Project (a must for anyone interested in maps), Honor Ridout on Tudor Cambridge and a new illustrated talk on West Wickham 100 years ago.

If you want to do some research of your own – your family or house for example – then do get in touch. We have a wealth of information and experience, particularly of local sources and records, and are more than willing to help.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to our meetings. For further details contact Janet Morris
21 High Street Tel: 290863 Email:
jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com

BROADBAND GREATER THAN 100MBPS?

- Are you unable to access broadband with speeds greater than 30Mbps?
- Are you interested in receiving Broadband speeds greater than 100Mbps?

Connecting Cambridgeshire has no further plans to improve our connectivity leaving approximately 14% of properties in our parish unable to achieve broadband speeds in excess of 30Mbps, with the majority of properties unable to access their ISP's faster options (above 40 to 56Mbps). While Boris Johnson has stated his desire to see full fibre for all the UK by 2025, I would not hold my breath - no information as to how this will be funded has been provided.

Don't despair. If you answered YES to EITHER of the two questions above, or are willing to help other residents access speeds greater than 30Mbps (or even 100Mbps), there is funding available through voucher schemes. These vouchers can be combined as a group or, dependent on the scheme, used individually, to access funding for the provision of FTTP to your doorstep. FTTP is also far more reliable than FTTC and allows access to Gigabit speeds.

The voucher schemes offer from £500 to £1500 for residents and £2500 to £3500 for small businesses, with a variety of options. If there is enough interest, by grouping together, even if you just want faster speeds, we could access the necessary funding for a service provider to provide higher broadband speeds.

If you are interested, please email your details and landline number used to access broadband to me at alex@schuilenburg.org.

Alex Schuilenburg

NATURE NOTES

I have been pondering recently about the number of small mammals there must be living in the long grass and undergrowth. A walk with Kip on the lead is frequently punctuated by sudden fox-like pounces, each of which is aimed at an unfortunate bank vole or wood mouse, (usually unsuccessfully). When one considers that these little creatures are a vital food source for various birds of prey and that domestic cats also do their share of killing, I reckon that without the predators we would be overrun. Some years ago I helped out with a mammal survey in Lower Wood in Weston Colville, which revealed (to me) a surprisingly high population density of these small mammals. They were all checked before being released and quite a few of the female mice and voles which were caught were pregnant, hinting at why there are so many of them.

Populations of small mammals can decline in winter if the weather is very cold, as they have no choice but to stay at home, unlike many of our winged friends who visit us in the summer. Many of the warblers who arrive in spring have now departed, some of them giving a final burst of song before they depart. Di has heard both chiffchaffs and willow warblers singing in early September. By now I expect they are a lot further south. The swallows and house martins have been gathering in groups before starting their journey back to Africa. On several mornings recently there have been a group of swallows on the overhead lines by the Village Hall. Di also reports seeing hundreds of swallows and martins on the wires near Upware making a deafening noise, while I saw a big group in flight near Brinkley, feeding on insects to sustain them for the long journey.

A more silent migrant is the painted lady butterfly, which took the number one spot in this year's big butterfly count. No-one will be surprised by that but by now the migration has gone into reverse in a sort of relay as they go through their breeding cycle while moving south. A more familiar butterfly, the red admiral is still in evidence locally. Many people have reported seeing plenty, most of which look absolutely pristine. Red admirals are also migrants even though we think of them as being of good British stock. They will head back to southern Europe leaving other large butterflies like the brimstone, peacock and comma to find somewhere to hibernate before re-emerging in the spring. Di tells me that on an early morning walk recently, she was creeping up on a comma butterfly who was feeding on ripe blackberries, when she was surprised by a barn owl as it flew out of an adjacent tree and across the field on its silent wings. It's moments like that which really give you a boost. Butterflies and other insects such as wasps and flies seem to like blackberries so it is no surprise to find that spiders have spun their webs in the brambles, notably the garden orb web spider with its magnificent stripy legs.

Last month I mentioned that we should try and appreciate the amazingly varied moth population and luckily several people have had the chance to see the wonderful hummingbird hawk moth with its lovely pink colouring and long proboscis. Thanks Nigel, Andy and others. Could you direct the next one you see towards our garden please?

Finally back to our four-legged fellow village residents. There has been a lot of badger activity seen whilst walking the local footpaths. Much excavating and several latrines.

Please send your nature sightings to:

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

Di Licence. T: 290434, E: dianarubylence@gmail.com

WEST WICKHAM & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB Autumn programme

- Monday 21 October** *Hostas*. Talk by Melanie Collins of Mickfield Hostas, Stowmarket.
- Monday 18 November** To be confirmed.
- Monday 16 December** Christmas quiz and social evening.

Meetings are held in the Village Hall starting at 7.30pm
Further details from: Rosemary Yallop. T: 01799 584262

WESTON COLVILLE CINEMA CLUB

On 2 October there'll be a classic comedy treat - Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* starring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. The November film will be a tie in with West Wrattling Book Club - on Wednesday 6 we'll be showing *The Go-Between* with Alan Bates and Julie Christie. Both films are at 7.30pm. All welcome, donations, introduction, refreshments available, enquiries:

Email: jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com, T: 291475.

LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING

We have lots of interesting workshops in the Autumn term why not come along and try something new?

Saturday 12 October 10am- 4pm. Upholstery, brides on a budget (flower arranging), painting with fleece, seasonal sunflowers and aromatherapy plus decorative reclaimed tin flowers (10am-1pm).

Saturday 9 November 10am-4pm. Indian head massage, nuno felt scarf, Silver jewellery beginners with second date on Sunday 10 November (must attend both sessions), plus musical instruments made from bamboo (10am-1pm).

Saturday 14 December. 9.30am-12.30pm Christmas door wreath Christmas table centre designs (1pm-4pm), make a simple automaton toy (10am-4pm).

For more details or an enrolment form please email adult.education@lvc.org or telephone 01223 891233 Ext 303 or 317 or browse on our new website www.lintonvillagecollegeadultlearning.co.uk

Margaret Kiddy & Jenny Logan
Adult Education Department

RECANING OF SMALLISH CHAIRS

During the winter months I am happy to recane smallish chairs. I do not charge but ask for a realistic donation for a small charity I support in Zimbabwe. Please contact Joanna Sanders sanderschimneys@uwclub.net or ring 893063

★ HUB NIGHT! ★
WEST WICKHAM VILLAGE HALL

NEXT DATE: **26.10.19** 7PM-11PM



HELP WITH TRANSPORT



Community Bus – if you see a plain white minibus with orange destination at the front, that's our number 19 community bus that provides a Monday to Friday service, about every two hours. You pay the driver or use your pass as you would with any bus. It connects with the Stagecoach 13/13A bus in Linton. This is from the current timetable: Enquiries: Big Green Bus Company 01440 706050

West Wickham, opp White Horse	07.52	09.08	11.38	13.38	16.09
Linton, opp Hillway	08.08	09.23	11.53	13.53	16.23
Haverhill, Sainsbury's		09.43	12.13	14.13	
Haverhill bus station		09.48	12.18	14.18	
Haverhill bus station (stand 3)		10.20	12.20	14.50	
Haverhill, Sainsbury's		10.25	12.25	14.55	
Linton, near Hillway		10.47	12.47	15.17	16.23
Streetly End					18.46
West Wickham, nr Church		10.59	12.59	15.29	16.35
					18.48

Stagecoach 16A service. Daily return service to Cambridge, will show 'Great Thurlow' on return journey.

Monday to Friday

West Wickham White Hart (Now White Gables)	07.23	Cambridge bus station (Bay 9)	16.30
Addenbrookes Hospital	08.06	Long Road 6 th Form College	16.52
Cambridge Bus Station	08.21	Addenbrookes Hospital (Bay B)	17.03
		West Wickham White Hart	17.47

Saturdays

West Wickham White Hart	10.47	Cambridge bus station (Bay 9)	17.40
Cambridge bus station	11.30	West Wickham White Hart	18.20

Big Green Bus Co 46 service. Return to Newmarket on Tuesdays (enquiries 01440 706050):

West Wickham High Street (White Horse)	09.46	Newmarket Tesco	13.03
West Wickham, 29 Burton End	09.48	Newmarket bus station (bay 1)	13.10
Newmarket bus station	10.15	West Wickham Burton End	13.37
Newmarket Tesco	10.22	West Wickham High Street	13.41

Helping Hands 07399 263222. Covers West Wickham, West Wrating, Weston Colville, Balsham and will take you to a hospital or doctor's appointment, or 'essential social journeys' for 30p a mile. Co-ordinators are responsible for finding a driver to fill every request. (New volunteer drivers or co-ordinators please contact Jenny Gooch on 01223 290662.)

Voluntary Network (formerly Three Counties Transport) 01440 712028. Dial a ride to Haverhill and destinations in between, for medical and non-medical visits. Complete an application and pay £15 annually to register, then either:

Book 7-10 days in advance

Phone nearer the time, including on the day, and if your times are flexible, a driver could be available

Jacqueline Douglas. Parish Nurse Community Support

1ST HORSEHEATH BROWNIES

We have just started back after a lovely summer break and welcomed Olivia, from Ashdon, who has just moved up from Linton Rainbows to the unit. Our first meeting back seemed to be full of food, well sweets anyway. We played our now traditional first game of the first meeting back - 'Don't eat Sammy sweetie' which as you can imagine is about sweets. We then constructed the tallest tower we could from spaghetti with mini-marshmallows as the glue/joints. It was a close call as to who had the tallest tower but it was Tayla and Freya with one and three-quarters water bottles to Bea and Ella's one and half water bottles (I bet you didn't know that water bottles were a recognised measurement!!).

By completing the towers it means we have finished our Innovate Skills builder so we now need to pick a new theme for this term, I'll let you know what that is next time.

Also this term we have Harvest pictures to complete for the church, pumpkin carving, birthday party, Christmas crafts and possibly a trip to Clip and Climb in Cambridge.

We currently have eight Brownies, hopefully growing to 10 by January and would welcome interest from all the surrounding villages.

As mentioned last time, Horseheath Brownies is 50 years old in October. We will be holding a small celebration towards the end of October with a 'bring a friend to Brownies' night but if you have anyone in your house who would like come along to see what we do at Brownies please do get in touch by giving me a ring on 01223 891086.

Pauline, Katie, and Laurené. brownies@horseheath.info

A REMINDER

The Parish Clerk, Jenny Richards will be collecting allotment rents on Saturday 12 October, 10.30—12.00 in the Village Hall or send/take to her address West Lodge, 88 High Street, Balsham. The rent is £15.00 for a full allotment; £7.50 for a half allotment per annum.

TOP TIPS FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

Throughout the year and particularly as the winter months draw in, we begin using our fires, burners and chimneys once again to warm our homes. In Cambridgeshire 83% of chimney fires occurred between September 2018 and March 2019. The highest recorded fires were in the coldest months of the year; totalling 44 chimney fires. As the UK is about to enter in to autumn, it is the perfect time to clean out your chimney. Follow our 'top tips' below to ensure your home is kept safe and warm all year round.

Chimneys and Fires

- Have your chimney swept once a year or more frequently if you burn wood
- Avoid burning resinous woods that quickly build up soot
- Only burn fuels suitable for your burner (eg. never burn anything other than wood in a wood burner)
- Do not overload the grate/ appliance
- Do not bank fires too high and remember to let them burn out well before you go to bed
- Check the hearth, floor and furnishings near the fire for hot sparks/embers
- Do not place objects on or over the mantelpiece which cause you to stand too close to the fire in order to reach them
- Use a fire/spark guard to prevent accidental fires and make sure it has the kite mark or conforms to British/European standards
- Inspect your chimney breast, particularly the roof space. Make sure it is sound and sparks/fumes cannot escape through cracks or broken bricks.

Wood/Multi-Fuel Burners

- A qualified and competent engineer should install all wood/multi-fuel burners and boilers – regular maintenance should be undertaken to prolong the working life of the appliance. Specialist servicing and maintenance will usually be provided by the company you purchase the appliance from but you can also refer to www.solidfuel.co.uk for advice and information
- Ensure correct ventilation is in place when the appliance is in use
- Wood burning appliances should only use the right quality wood recommended by the supplier
- Regularly inspect the chimney and flues
- Generally wood should be well-seasoned (usually wood kept dry and stored for around 2 years)
- Avoid wet or newly felled wood as this will cause tars/creosote deposits forming in the burning appliance and chimney
- Using laminated chip boards will leave binding glue deposits
- For each slow burning period there should follow a quick burn to dry out unwanted tar/creosote deposits and to warm up the chimney again
- At the end of each burning season and at least once during the season the entire system should be cooled and thoroughly cleaned to maintain top performance.

Most importantly

- Fit a smoke alarm that carries the kite mark or British Standard Number 5446. Test your alarm weekly by pressing the test button & know the life of your battery.

- Always also install a CO alarm in the room where the burner is installed. Chimney Fires continue to be a common occurrence in home fires in the winter months.

We experience an average of 81 chimney fires a year in Cambridgeshire alone. Whatever fire you have, or fuel you burn, it is vitally important you have your chimney swept to avoid a build-up of ash and soot.

THE GARDENING CLUB ANNUAL SHOW

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Gardening Club's Annual show this year - all the exhibitors, the judges, those who came along to admire the produce on show, take part in the raffle and auction and enjoy tea and cake and of course the hardworking Committee and Club members.

Regretfully the number of entries was considerably down on last year but it was encouraging to see some first-time exhibitors taking part and I hope they have been inspired to have another go next time. The "difficult" growing conditions experienced this year almost certainly affected the number of vegetable and flower exhibits and disappointingly there was only one entry in the children's classes. Happily the photography classes, reintroduced last year, produced a healthy number of entries and a new cup winner, Lucy Cameron.

If you have any suggestions as to how to make the Show more appealing to both exhibitors and spectators, the Committee would be very interested to hear from you. The date of the show has moved over the years in an attempt to find the best time when exhibitors have the most produce to show and the village is not all away on holiday. The Bank Holiday Saturday was clearly not the right choice so we would like your views. I have now "retired" as the Show Co-ordinator but I'm very pleased that Sue Thurston was elected to this role at the club's recent AGM.

Andrew Morris



Small Villages

Community Warden Event

You are warmly invited
to attend the
Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Small Villages Community Warden Event
At West Wratting Village Hall

On
Wednesday 23rd October 2019
12pm until 3pm

Come and join us for a light lunch and some
entertainment.
This is a **FREE** event

To book your place and transport (if needed)
Please call
Carol on **07436102866**

Age UK Cambridgeshire, 2 Victoria Street, Chatteris
Cambridgeshire PE16 6AP

MEADOW SCHOOL NEWS

Welcome back to the new academic year. It is hard to believe where a six week summer holiday went, but already the school is back into full swing.

We are always thrilled to see the smiling faces of children returning to school in September and this year was no exception. The start of term has gone very smoothly, and it has been lovely to see old faces returning and welcoming in all our new children and families. Our youngest children have settled in brilliantly, with the help of their new Year 6 buddies. They are invaluable at training them in the tricky aspects of school life, especially helping them to cut up their food and balance their tray without dropping its entire contents on the floor!



on the floor!

For the rest of the school, children have dived straight into their learning. They had already spent time on their transition days back in July getting to know their new teachers and class mates, which really helped relationships start positively. This year we are having a huge focus on developing children's vocabulary. There is extensive research on the impact of vocabulary rich school and home life; vocabulary at the age of 5 is a strong predictor of success at age 16. Each teacher is using a 'Word of the Day' to build children's vocabulary and already children have been exposed to words such as 'plethora' and 'bland'. If you are a parent or relative associated to a Meadow pupil, please do encourage them to share these new words with you.

The school undertook some major building works to our drainage this summer. Over the past few years, the school has suffered some serious damage from flash flooding. After a laborious grant application, we were awarded funding to install an advanced borehole and drainage system which has only been used 12 times before. This meant digging up the entire Early Years area, Key Stage 1 playground and digging a 30 metre hole in the school field! Now this is all complete, we can relax when there is a storm warning issued!

Alongside the building work, we have installed some new playground equipment for the children, generously funded by the PTA. The children now have access to some fantastic giant musical instruments, a sensory maze to explore and a giant solar panelled stop watch. The children have loved exploring these and have already made up some new games. We are very grateful to the PTA for all the hard work they have put in place in order for this to happen.

We are very excited about the year ahead. Please do keep up-to-date with school news either on our school website or on Twitter @Meadow_Balsham.

Helen Loe, Assistant Head Teacher

★ **HUB NIGHT!** ★
WEST WICKHAM VILLAGE HALL

NEXT DATE: **26.10.19** 7PM-11PM



USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Parish Nurse: Claire Gillett, T:07498994205
Mobile: 0749 899 4205
email:7churches.parishnurse@gmail.com

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday unless otherwise stated on her mobile phone. This is NOT a 24hr monitored service.

Community Warden: Shannon Cook, T: 07436102865

Helping Hands: 07399 263222

Granta Medical Practice/Linton Health Centre:
0300 234 5555 option 3

FROM THE VICARAGE

I've been reminded many times over the last month how gratitude and thanksgiving are central to our lives. A few weeks ago I baptized a child in Great Abington church and it was such a joy to share with the child's family and friends this thanksgiving for life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. More recently I attended a family funeral in Pembrokeshire and experienced how mourning and thanksgiving can become deeply intermingled. This thanksgiving may then spill over into reflecting on our priorities in life, reminding us how important it is to give thanks for each day, for family and friends and for all the blessings of life, amidst its sorrows and joys.

Many Harvest thanksgiving services and suppers have also been enjoyed over the last month. Here we praise God as the one who gives and seek to respond with generosity. Thanksgiving, however, is actually at the heart of any Christian worship. We hear scriptures and bless and share bread and wine with thanksgiving. Holy Communion reminds us that even under the shadow of the last supper, when Jesus anticipates clearly his suffering and death, he still gives thanks. It's no wonder, then, that thanksgiving permeates our prayer. Anne Lamott, the contemporary American novelist, said prayers are often, at their heart, a mixture of: help, sorry, thanks and wow!

Thanksgiving is indeed a deeply human need which shapes the way we see the world around us and treat others. Harvest thanksgiving encourages this to overflow into the rest of life so that it may give us the energy and vision for thanksgiving in all things, for making a connection between human experience and the divine. This does not mean we look at situations of suffering and simply pass on, expecting nothing to change, but in the joys and sorrows of life, in the depths of a person or situation, we may still recognise God the giver and allow gratitude, repentance and new life to well up from that point. In doing so we may see people, places and things charged with depth and look to treat them with both reverence and care.

Revd Iain McColl

PRESS DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 16 October

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