

# VILLAGE VOICE

NEWS FROM WEST WICKHAM & STREETLY END

NOVEMBER 2020

ISSUE 210

## WHEELED BIN COLLECTIONS

Monday 2 November	Black
Monday 9 November	Blue & green
Monday 16 November	Black
Monday 23 November	Blue & green
Monday 30 November	Black

Household Recycling Centres have reopened  
visit the South Cambs website  
[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

## ST MARY'S CHURCH SERVICES

1 November. 10am. Morning worship.

**8 November. 12.00. Remembrance service  
Wrattling Common Memorial.**

15 November. 9am. Holy Communion.

22 November. 10am. Morning worship.

29 November. 10am. Morning worship.

**For services at other churches go to:  
[www.grantavale.org.uk](http://www.grantavale.org.uk)**

## FOR UPDATES & USEFUL INFORMATION GO TO

**[www.westwickham.org](http://www.westwickham.org)**

**If you aren't online the Editors are more  
than happy to help.**

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

**Parish Nurse:** Claire Gillett.

T: 07498994205, Mobile: 0749 899 4205.

Email: [7churches.parishnurse@gmail.com](mailto:7churches.parishnurse@gmail.com)

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

**Community Warden:** Carol Poll.

T: 07436102865

**Granta Medical Practice / Linton Health  
Centre:**

T: 0300 234 5555 option 3, followed by option  
1 for appointments, option 2 for the Pharmacy.

## PRESS DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 16 November

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**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.**

## COVID-19

This is beginning to rear its ugly head again, and although Cambridgeshire and our local villages have been relatively unscathed, we would like to remind you that the West Wickham and Streetly End support group is still here. The 'Buddy' scheme is still up and running. Early in the year we had many local volunteers who looked out for their friends and neighbours, and we know that they still do. We are better prepared now, the local shops and supermarkets have been brilliant in their deliveries, and our local Health Centre have got prescriptions sorted, so we should have fewer problems than earlier in the year. Hopefully we won't be made to have another 'lockdown' and be able to keep the sports / pubs and church services that we enjoy now. Our greatest worry, now and into the future, is the isolation and loneliness of those people living alone in our community. If you know of anyone, please try to make contact. Nicky Cornish, T: 290203 or Di Licence, T: 290434



**WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER**

## WEST WICKHAM POST OFFICE SERVICE

The Post Office are restoring services to West Wickham with the introduction of a Mobile Post Office. This will start on Thursday 5 November with the mobile post office parking in the Village Hall car park and will be available every Thursday from 14.00 to 15.00. The Postmaster from Finchingfield will operate the service, which presents the best possible solution to restore a post office to West Wickham.

- There will be a wide range of services available.
- There is a step into the vehicle but an electronic tailgate is available to facilitate easy access for wheelchairs and those with disabilities.
- Parking will be available close to the van.

The Post Office would welcome comments on this new service. Email [comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk) or phone 03452 660105 or visit the website [www.postofficeviews.co.uk](http://www.postofficeviews.co.uk)

## NO DOGS PLEASE

The Parish council would like to point out that DOGS are NOT ALLOWED in the children's playground. On several occasions I have found children in the playground, presumably 'walking' their dogs. The dogs are running around loose inside the fence, while the children are on the swings. There is a clear notice on the playground fence stating NO dogs, so PLEASE keep to the rules. Can parents who send their children out to walk the dogs please make sure that your child is not taking them to the playground. Thank you.

Di Licence

## POPPY APPEAL 2020

Poppies, poppy pins and wooden crosses will be available in Balsham Post Office, The Old Butcher's Coffee Shop, The Bell, The Black Bull and the Chestnut Tree. As there cannot be any house-to-house collection, it is possible to collect a poppy from West Wickham church porch and make your usual donations via my JustGiving page [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Margaret-Johnson-PAO-for-Balsham-West-Wickham-ECF03-Area](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Margaret-Johnson-PAO-for-Balsham-West-Wickham-ECF03-Area)

Thank you..

Margaret Johnson

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the meeting held on Monday 28 September the following were some of the matters discussed. The full draft minutes are on the noticeboards.

### *Planning:*

20/01233. Insertion of 2 dormer windows in the roof of 47 Streetly End. It was decided to object to this.

20/01564. Solar Farm: No decision has been made yet by SCDC.

20/02565. It was agreed to object to building a new dwelling on the old White Horse PH car park.

20/02485. Extension to 71 High Street. Permission had been granted.

20/03502. Extension to 103 High Street. It was agreed to support it.

20/03672. Barn conversion at The Meadow, Streetly End. Although this is a permitted development it was felt there is a need for clarification as the proposed dwelling has a different footprint to the barn.

*Greater Cambridge Partnership Local Plan:* Cllr. Sargeant reported there are two consultations being carried out, the GCP Local Plan and also the government Planning for the Future. The SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer cannot speculate about what the impact of the later will be on our Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has decided to continue with the current draft plan.

As part of the GCP Local Plan call for sites, development on land at Platt's farm and south of the High Street has been proposed by the landowner. The land south of the High Street would be contrary to the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which proposes this should be an important countryside frontage. Cllr Sargeant had responded to the consultation.

*Zero Carbon Funding:* Funding of £15,000 to put solar

panels on the Village Hall roof has been applied for.

*Allotments:* The vacant allotments have now been filled and the rents for the year collected.

### *Village Hall & Recreation ground:*

a) Quotes are being sought for the replacement of the rotten woodwork on the slide mound.

b) Dogs are not allowed in the play area as their droppings are a hazard to health.

*Defibrillator:* No decision could be made about the best type of equipment to be purchased until the VPMC had some response about grants. It was agreed that the Parish Council were happy to support having this equipment and it was suggested this could be a 50/50 purchase between the Parish Council and the Village Hall.

### *Traffic & Parking issues:*

a) The gates and sharks teeth are in place and a 40mph lead buffer zone at the Burton End entrance to the village.

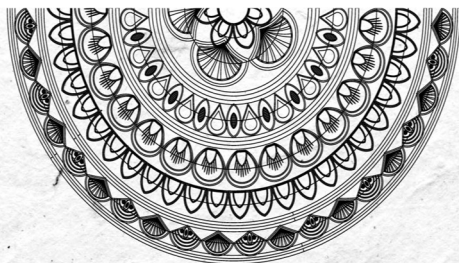
b) *Report on A1307 Phase 1 zoom meeting:* Cllr. Hazelhurst reported about the Dene Road junction. Those driving from West Wickham or Balsham will be able to turn left and right but those coming from Bartlow will only be able to turn left and access the other side of the road at the new Bartlow/Linton roundabout. The proposed Park & Ride at Linton has been abandoned. There will be 50mph speed cameras all along the A1307 from Haverhill to Linton.

c) *Speedwatch.* There is a shortage of volunteers to help run the scheme. Anyone who would like to offer their time should please contact Cllr Licence.

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 23 November. It may possibly be a zoom meeting.**

Jennifer Richards. Parish Clerk. T: 01223 665260,

Email: clerk@westwickham.org



## COMMUNITY YOGA CLASSES

Yoga every Thursday evening from 4-5pm  
at the village hall in West Wickham.

Classes are inclusive of age, ability, fitness  
levels & much more.

£8 per drop in or £30 for a 4 class pass.

**PLEASE CONTACT MYRIAM ON  
07494130699 OR ON  
M.EL-SOLH@HOTMAIL.CO.UK FOR MORE  
INFORMATION & HOW TO BOOK IN.**

## MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Thanks to the amazing generosity of the people of Balsham, West Wrating, Weston Colville and West Wickham I paid £647 into the appeal account (thanks to Helen of Balsham PO for counting all the money) and with around £55 of Gift Aid to be added it comes to over £700. Therese, who made the delicious pancakes, gave a very generous donation. Gill PB organised a 'safe' raffle – 17 prizes were donated for which many thanks to the donors. This total is way above what was raised in 2019 (£470). Thank you to those who braved gale force winds to come to the Recreation Ground car park for the pancakes and the raffle and also our helpers who put in much time and energy so this event could take place.

Joanna Saunders

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JIGSAW PUZZLES?

I have now set up a jigsaw puzzle exchange at the back of the garage at Nine Chimney House, Balsham. The garage is open as there are now no garage doors. I have a selection of over 40 jigsaws mainly of 500 and 1000 pieces. Do please come and look and bring any jigsaws that you no longer want – please look in your attics or anywhere you might be keeping them! There is hand sanitiser and washing facilities but suggest you wear gloves and bring bag to take jigsaws away or to donate them.

Joanna Saunders, T: 893033,

Email: sanderschimneys@uwclub.net

## GRANTA Medical Practices

**Coronavirus Update.** We continue to work hard to keep our patients as safe as possible, along with our staff and our community. Patient access is by invitation only, following a prior telephone assessment. If the assessing clinician feels it is clinically necessary to see you, they will arrange for you to come in and see them.

Essential care, such as NHS immunisations, blood tests, smear tests, and mother and baby checks, continues to go ahead at selected sites. We carry out temperature checks on both staff and patients to minimise risk. Patients are asked to wear, and are provided with, masks when entering any of our buildings.

As we all know, coronavirus information seems to change by the day. For the very latest news go to [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Flu Clinics.** Thanks to a fantastic community collaboration with Duxford Imperial War Museum, we held the county's first ever drive-thru flu clinic on Saturday 3 October, vaccinating 1,500 patients without the need for anyone to get out their cars. The weather was atrocious but it did not dampen our spirits, nor our patients, who were cheerful and supportive throughout the day.

We are holding smaller flu clinics at each surgery site throughout November. To book an appointment please ring 0300 234 5555.

**New Granta Website.** Our new website goes live in late October. It has been designed for easy navigation, has an accessibility widget, and incorporates a new, direct contact form. If you have a moment we would love you to give us some feedback. Whilst I cannot guarantee to accommodate every comment, all suggestions will be taken into consideration. The website address is

[www.grantamedicalpractices.co.uk](http://www.grantamedicalpractices.co.uk)

Sandra East, Granta Communications.

Email: [sandra.east@nhs.net](mailto:sandra.east@nhs.net)

## PANDA

It is with very heavy hearts but fond memories that we have to let you know that Panda was 'put to sleep' on 9 October to avoid further suffering due to having a tumour and abscess in her mouth and throat causing great loss of weight, condition and quality of life.

Panda, racing name JAMES BAMBOO notched up 3 wins and 7 placings before refusing to leave the Trap one day. She arrived at 1, Streetly End in May 1913, aged 2, after an appeal for a home in the Classified section of the Cambridge Evening News and was seen every day being exercised up around Hare Wood and along the Roman Road or towards Kit and Jean's windmill and up the fields back to the Church, until we moved to Nichols Court in Linton, when Beryl began to become poorly.

Panda was just as popular with the residents in Nichols Court as in Streetly End, a measure of her lovely, calm & friendly nature and she is already missed by all who knew her. For the last 18 months or so Vic has been unable to walk Panda due to a fall and illness but thanks to **The Cinnamon Trust**, 4 walkers in Linton were found for her daily exercise and this was a life saver for all.

The object of **The Cinnamon Trust** is to provide volunteers to help aged or sick pet owners who find themselves unable to care for their pets, at no charge. We recommend that any pet friendly person, especially likely walkers, should contact: The Cinnamon Trust, 10, Market Square, Hayle,

## RAF WRATTING COMMON Remembrance Sunday 8 November

No doubt, this year's Remembrance Day Service will have to be changed to keep in line with whatever Covid-19 restrictions are in place come the date. However, it is still our intention to hold a short Service at the Memorial on Sunday 8 November at 12 noon, adapted to suit those restrictions.

We will be posting updates nearer the time on our Facebook Group *Friends of Wrating Common 2020* or follow this link: [www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Wrating-Common-2020-104097787938987/](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Wrating-Common-2020-104097787938987/)

The Memorial is situated at Weston Woods Farm, Weston Colville, CB21 5NR. We hope to be joined by some of the Veterans who served with XC Squadron, 1651 Heavy Conversion Unit and 195 Squadron. Also, 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. Attendees are invited to lay wreaths or crosses for those they wish to remember and anyone is welcome to attend.

### WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

Dan Heath for Friends of Wrating Common

Email [rafwratingcommon@gmail.com](mailto:rafwratingcommon@gmail.com). Tel. Mob: 07736 737 174' Home: 01440 730 192

We are always pleased to hear from anyone interested in getting involved with the Airfield Memorial. With just two services per year to arrange, as well as year-round general maintenance, this is not an onerous project to assist with but is very rewarding. It is hoped that, with the continued support of people in the locality, this important memorial to our community's war effort will survive for many generations.

Cornwall.TR27 4HE. Email [admin@cinnamon.org.uk](mailto:admin@cinnamon.org.uk) or visit [www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk)

Please consider doing this to celebrate the memory of our beautiful & loving companion Panda .

Beryl & Vic. Ex White Horse & Streetly End

### GUESS WHERE AND WHEN?



**Answer on page 6.** From West Wickham & District Local History Club Photo Archive

## NATURE NOTES

Last month I commented on what is hidden from us in the natural world but we also sometimes overlook things that are familiar. Just recently, while waiting for her dog, Di was struck by a pleasant fragrance coming from a patch of flowering ivy. It is a lovely plant, albeit rampant in the wild, with its shiny green leaves, and black berries. It gives some of us a nettle like rash on our skin, and can be considered a nuisance as it climbs up trees and walls, and brings down trellis with its sheer weight, but it is a valuable plant to many of our insects. When the sun is on the flowers, there is a multitude of bees/wasps/flies feeding on the nectar. As it flowers in the autumn, it is a very useful source of food and shelter for many species. Surprisingly perhaps there are still quite a few other flowers in bloom. I noticed scabious, mallow, buttercup, dandelion and yarrow today and Di counted 14 different species, which isn't bad for mid October.

Another familiar sight is that of starlings, usually in small groups, sitting on the roof tops, or wires chattering away, their iridescent plumage brilliant in the sunshine. But, get a large group together, or several small groups, and when they merge, they are something completely different. At this time of the year they gather in vast groups, and fly around, swirling, ducking and diving in ever amazing circles. This behaviour is called a murmuration, and it is spectacular, whether seen in West Wickham or elsewhere. It is thought that they are gathering in large numbers for safety before they roost for the night. Di was lucky enough to witness this a week ago on the field next to the Old Vicarage, and watched as they danced in the sky, then dived into the vegetation with a loud chirping and whistling.

I was driving up the High Street recently and had to slow for a sparrowhawk in the middle of the road holding a woodpigeon in its talons. The hawk flew off still holding the pigeon before no doubt continuing to pluck and subdue its prey. You can see why starlings stick together seeking safety in numbers which can be very confusing for a predator.

Autumn is a time of flux in the natural world. We had a final reminder of summer here in Streetly End at the beginning of October. Jean Martin reported seeing a group of 20 swallows whizzing around above Webbs Lane. No doubt they were feeding on small insects before embarking on the journey south. The family that had nested in the mill had fledged a couple of weeks previously so this large group may have been en route from further north. In contrast, a sure sign of winter approaching was a flock of about 30 fieldfares flying over this week, chuckling away.

Of course there are many birds, mammals, insects and other life forms that stay in West Wickham for the winter and try and make the best of things. Some hibernate, some arrest their development while others go into a form of lockdown. Chris Field sent Di a picture of two insects in her toilet bowl. Red and black in colour, with large antennae. They were burying or sexton beetles, so named as they bury their prey. They have a very good sense of smell and 'clubbed' antennae. What they were doing in her loo, we have no idea, but were almost certainly not in the process of migration.

Please send your nature sightings to:

Peter Grieve. T: 01223 897811, E: [mail@petergrieve.co.uk](mailto:mail@petergrieve.co.uk)  
Di Licence. T: 290434, E: [dianarubylicence@gmail.com](mailto:dianarubylicence@gmail.com)

## A REMINDER

**Don't recycle used masks and gloves.  
Put in your general waste bin.**

## WHAT IS THAT BIRD?

Have you ever had a look at the coat of arms (more properly called a crest) of Cambridgeshire County Council or the one for South Cambs District Council? If so, have you ever wondered



what that strange bird is that appears on them both and what on earth it might have to do with West Wickham?

This is the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), a large ground dwelling bird which was once common on the grassland and open fields of south Cambridgeshire. According to the RSPB, archaeological evidence has shown that it was a native bird supplemented by migrating birds from continental Europe during the winter months. The last great bustard was supposedly shot in Great Shelford in 1832 although solitary birds were seen there until 1856. Its disappearance was probably due to the loss of habitat as large fields and waste ground was enclosed into smaller, hedged and cultivated units in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although sporting activities might also have contributed to its demise.

We have our own great bustard story here. In 1928, Jonas Marshall Webb published a memoir of his family at Streetly Hall (*Streetly: A Tale of Cambridgeshire by a "Native"*) in which he says that 'in his time' a great bustard was 'ingloriously "potted"' near West Wickham church by a 'murderous neighbour'. Jonas was born in 1859 and had left home to work as an auctioneer by 1881, so this undoubtedly puts this incident later than 1856. This bird, too, could have well been a solitary migrant. Incidentally, the implied disapproval is more to do with the fact that the bird was shot in an unsportsmanlike way while it was on the ground, rather than that it was shot at all! I have just seen another reference that says that in the 1840s/50s great bustards 'ran in droves like turkeys' over fields then belonging to Manor Farm in Horseheath. A drove apparently being the correct word for the social units in which gregarious great bustards live.

I'm not entirely clear whether it was this once abundance of the birds in the county or the fact that the last one was shot here which induced the County Council to include two great bustards as supporters in the county crest. The current crest dates from 1976 but was from arms originally granted in 1914. The crest of South Cambs District Council, which also contains a great bustard, was granted in 1978 but incorporated from the Chesterton crest of 1965. However, Cambridgeshire is not the only county to feature the bird in its crest. That of the old Wiltshire County Council (now superseded by a unitary authority with no crest) also contained the bird because it claims that the last one was supposedly shot *there* and it is in Wiltshire that there has been a very successful re-introduction project in recent years. The Great Bustard Group ([greatbustard.org](http://greatbustard.org)) reports that there is now a self-sustaining population of around 100 birds in a reserve on Salisbury Plain (you can visit this – see the website for details). So, is it about time for a reintroduction of our county bird to Cambridgeshire as well?

Janet Morris. West Wickham & District Local History Club  
Email: [jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com](mailto:jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com) Tel: 290863

## LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE NEWS

We are really keen to make effective use of what was originally the Warden's House and more recently a caretaker's onsite residence. The property needs some adaptation and renovation to make it fit for purpose as an educational building.

With regular fundraising opportunities through the Friends of LVC being restricted for the time being, we would like to run some crowdfunding through the College's Just Giving website. The funds raised would contribute to the cost of refurbishing the house and creating a welcoming learning space for our most vulnerable students and those in need of more individualised support.

If you are able to contribute financially, we would be very grateful for your support via: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/lvcinclusionproject>. Alternatively, you may have trade skills that you could offer the College to help us with this project by contacting [Reception@lvc.org](mailto:Reception@lvc.org).

Helena Marsh, Principal

## CAR KEY BURGLARY WARNING

Cambridgeshire police would like to highlight a recent series of car key burglaries, which are taking place across all force areas. Please be alert to suspicious activity at addresses where there are high powered vehicles such as BMW's, Audi's and Mercedes. Burglaries are being committed to obtain vehicle keys as improved security means that these vehicles are more difficult to steal without a key.

They are encouraging residents to remain vigilant during the day, lookout for any unusual people or vehicles paying attention to the driveway of a house where a desirable car is parked, even if it is not there at the time, similarly late at night. If you are coming or going be on the lookout for unusual activity.

Owners of high value, desirable cars are advised to take extra precautions. Never leave vehicle or other keys in open view of your letterbox or ground floor window where a potential offender could easily access them by fishing them out. Consider installing a cage or security device to keep the letterbox secure.

- Always lock windows and doors.
- Fit a steering wheel lock / or security device.
- The safety and protection of people should always come first.
- Aggravated burglary is rare in Cambridgeshire, but if the thief is persistent enough to break in, it's best they take the keys and leave.
- If you have a secure garage you can park your car in overnight, do use it.
- Set burglar alarms and any other security devices you have installed. Consider a driveway alarm to give you early warning of someone approaching on your drive.
- Consider fitting a tracking device, if your car is stolen there is a greater chance of it being traced.
- Be alert to who is around and where your keys are.

Report suspicious activity to police on 101, or 999 in an emergency. Without putting yourself at risk, try to obtain a description of anyone you saw, and registration numbers of vehicles that can be passed on to police to aid investigation. Criminal activity can also be reported to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Rachel Carr, Police Community Safety Officer.

## FROM THE VICARAGE

### "What is truth?"

'The first casualty of war is truth'. I'm not sure that anyone knows who said that first. I guess it's become something of a cliché. And like all clichés, even if true, it's easy to disregard. Nevertheless, it invariably comes to mind, for me, in early November when the British Legion, supplying the poppies, rolls us forward to Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday. For the remembrance of past wars (the sacrifices and heroism, the young lives cut short) always carries with it the risk of patriotism being soured and congealing into jingoistic nationalism. And the truth *about* war – both sides in the conflict, caught up in a collective, brutal dehumanising of the other side – again becomes an early casualty when love for one's country is exploited by malign forces.

But 'needs must' some will say, 'You can't win a war by being entirely truthful. It's not a good idea to pause and reflect when someone is trying to kill and destroy you. Don't worry, when the hostilities of war are ended, we will reinstate the primacy of truth. After all, it's a mark of civilization'.

It's disturbing, then, that in recent peacetime the coinage of *truth* in international and national debate seems (at least in some quarters) to have become what the more powerful players think they *can get away with saying*. For example, about the consequences of climate change, or about the effectiveness of measures fighting Covid-19 and about Brexit.

'Ah, but you'd be a fool to trust *any* politicians'. Another cliché, which to a degree rings true; yet can we too readily accept this as the status quo? Worryingly, has truth lost its power to change the course of things? Or, should we be asking, 'What is truth'? Christians contemplating these questions can hardly fail to recall this very same question being asked of Jesus when on trial before Pontius Pilate. Jesus said 'Everyone who belongs to the truth, listens to my voice'. Pilate asked him, 'What is truth'? Jesus was silent because truth was standing before Pilate; but Pilate failed to see it.

The genius of the Remembrance Service is surely the two minute silence in which all, Christian or not, can stand together, trying to hold some truth in that silence however tangled our minds.

Christians these days are probably more comfortable talking about love, rather than truth; and that can surely include love of one's country. But love left simply as a blob of thoughtless emotion or sentimentally is not quite good enough; and Christians would do well to reflect on their belief that in Christ, love and truth are one. Yet, for all of us, standing in silence before the dead youths we remember, their lives sacrificed for some sort of truth, we might do well to make it our resolve, likewise, to resist any cheapening of truth.

Alistair Collen, Lay Minister

## CHURCH SERVICES

As well as services in West Wickham church, each Sunday we have services in other churches in the Granta Vale as well as a 'Time of Prayer' service held on Zoom at 10am. A link to our zoom service may be found in our weekly email newsletter and please ask our church administrator, Cazzy Walshe, at [7churches.seven@gmail.com](mailto:7churches.seven@gmail.com) if you wish to receive this newsletter from us.

Details of all of our weekly services may be found both in our newsletter and on our website: [www.grantavale.org.uk](http://www.grantavale.org.uk)

Rev. Iain McColl

## MEADOW SCHOOL NEWS

'It always seems impossible until it's done.' Nelson Mandela. This resonated so much with the staff community all through the summer holidays as we prepared to welcome back all of the children to our school after being away for over 170 days. Meticulous planning, risk assessments galore, bubble planning, an abundance of cleaning products, re designed classrooms, one way systems, nominated gates for entry and exit and so much more were all carefully considered and planned for. There were many times before September, where the Senior Leadership Team felt that it was impossible to return to our school community and for school to have the same feel, care and engagement that we were so used to. However we did it and all of the children have returned, happy, enthusiastic and so pleased to be back in a routine and seeing their friends.



We have found ways to keep things as normal as possible while still ensuring we follow all of the new protocols. Whoever knew how long it takes across the day to wash hands six times or more. The record for the amount of blue paper handtowels used in a day currently sits at 2000!

Staff, children and families have been so supportive.

Everyone is playing their part and working so hard to keep everyone safe and school open. Whoever would have thought that when they took their child for their first ever day at school, like our Reception Class parents did, that they would only be able to drop them at the gate and not take them in through the door? We are about to embark on our first ever virtual parents evenings as we are determined to keep the links we have with families as real and interactive as we can.

The world we live in at the minute requires us all to do so much more thinking and planning than we ever have and to adapt ways of working. During lockdown, when we had up to 100 children in school, we found new ways of doing things and many of these were for the better we discovered and have made the conscious effort to continue to do.

Wellbeing remains a high priority for us and we have just concluded our mini whole school topic using the amazing book *Here we are* by Oliver Jeffers. The book allowed us to restore relationships, think about our uniqueness, things that are special to us and others and how we all need to unite too. Artwork and writing inspired from the project adorn our corridors and display boards, helping to bring life back to the school.

School may be different, it may be hard work implementing all of the new routines and cleaning protocols, but my goodness it is worth it. Listening to the children laugh and joke, seeing them play with friends in their bubble and become so excited when they get a certificate via our Zoom celebration assembly are all the things that keep us all going at the minute and the things we have missed so much.

Keep safe everyone.

Nichola Connor, Headteacher

## GUESS WHERE AND WHEN? ANSWER

41A Streetly End c1930. When the photo was taken the cottage was called Walnut Tree Cottage. The name was changed to Orchard Cottage for a while and is now Walnut Tree Cottage once again. A warning to all trying to trace the history of their house - names do not necessarily stay the same!

For further details of these buildings (or information/memories of them) or of the Photo Archive contact Janet Morris: Tel: 290863, Email: [jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com](mailto:jmmorris@jmmorris.plus.com)

## BALSHAM SINGERS

October 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of Balsham Singers. I have been involved from the very start, helping with admin and organisation, joining the committee once the choir took off. Nobody expected to do more than one concert! The founder was a close neighbour and friend, Julian Robinson, who expressed a wish to sing the Hallelujah Chorus in the village church. Our Rector, Bill Girard, took hold of the idea and set about finding a Musical Director. He had a man in mind.

Jonathan Cook had just moved to West Wickham, another parish of Bill's; he had recently graduated from Oxford where he was an Organ scholar. Bill hadn't got a permanent organist so his arrival was fortuitous. At 24 Jonathan became the first MD of Balsham Singers. The Balsham Review was the recruiting tool for choir members who were invited to attend the Rectory for the first meeting to judge interest. The plan was to produce part of Handel's Messiah at Christmas, a mere 7-8 weeks ahead. About 35 people attended and Jonathan had his 'choir'. He had absolutely no idea what he was taking on, what the standard would be but he took that very brave step. Balsham Singers had arrived.

A small core of the new choir had sung together before in a parents choir at the Meadow school. The wonderful headmaster, Jim Golightly recruited willing parents to support his children's choir and fund raising events. We didn't sing many classical pieces though, so this was quite a departure for some of us. I had always sung in my school choir and larger groups but not since school, except for Linton Folk Club!! Most of the choir were almost twice Jonathan's age but he dealt with us well and he stayed 7 years until his work dictated he move on.

Greg Mackenzie replaced him, another young and very talented man. The choir grew in numbers and capability under his baton. I had a few years off during his tenure as I had family commitments but the choir and our audiences continued to grow.

John Clenaghan, our current MD, joined us in 2012 and has taken the choir from strength to strength. The choir has grown and he has introduced different genres to our repertoire, embracing musical theatre, and popular music as well as the sacred and classical. He seems to manage to raise the best in us just at the right time.

I am very sad that we cannot produce our now much appreciated annual Christmas concert which has always been well supported. Indeed we are uncertain when we will be able to meet up again, let alone produce a concert, but we will be back.

Thank you for supporting the choir, we look forward to meeting together again when it is safe to do so.

Jo Stinton

(Ed. This was in last month's Balsham Review. Several people from West Wickham have sung and sing with the Singers and many more have enjoyed their concerts so we thought you would be interested in reading it.)