

# The Welwyn Magazine with Woolmer Green



**June 2023**

60p

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### TEAM RECTOR

The Rev'd Dr David Munchin, The Rectory, 2 Ottway Walk, Welwyn AL6 9AS.....[rector@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:rector@welwyn.org.uk)  
*Not available on Fridays*.....01438 714150

### TEAM VICARS

The Rev'd Susannah Underwood, The Rectory, Brookbridge Lane, Datchworth SG3 4SU.....[teamvicar@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:teamvicar@welwyn.org.uk)  
*Responsible for Datchworth & Tewin. Not available on Tuesdays*.....01438 817183

The Rev'd Canon Philip Waller, The Rectory, Bury Lane, Codicote SG4 8XX.....[vicar@stgiles-church.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stgiles-church.org.uk)  
*Responsible for Codicote. Not available on Saturdays*.....01438 504318

### ASSISTANT CURATES

The Rev'd Christie Gilfeather, St Michael's House, 3 London Road, Woolmer Green SG3 6JU.....[curate@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:curate@welwyn.org.uk)  
*Not available on Thursdays*.....01438 561702

The Rev'd Ryan Gilfeather, St Michael's House, 3 London Road, Woolmer Green SG3 6JU.....[curate@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:curate@welwyn.org.uk)

### CHURCH OFFICE

Tina Hassan, Team Secretary.....[secretary@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:secretary@welwyn.org.uk).....01438 840964

Opening Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 9.00 am until 1.00 pm, and Fridays 9.00 am until 12 noon.

### CHURCHWARDENS

Diane Jenkin (St Mary's Welwyn).....01438 840710

Stuart Westley (St Mary's Welwyn).....07921 568187

Susan Keach (St. Michael's Woolmer Green).....01438 716657

James Nall-Cain (Ayot St Peter).....01582 831083

### READERS

John Burnapp .....01438 717707

Colin Hull .....01438 813974

Usha Hull .....01438 813974

Catherine Jupp .....07811 255311

Michael Simmons .....01438 817510

### ORGANISTS

Robert Milner - Director of Music, St Mary's Welwyn.....[milnerrobert1@me.com](mailto:milnerrobert1@me.com).....07540 847599

Penny Howes - St Michael's Woolmer Green.....01438 716742

Vacant - Ayot St Peter.....

### PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARIES

David & Louise Hughes (Welwyn & Woolmer Green).....[louise@elhughes37.plus.com](mailto:louise@elhughes37.plus.com).....

Richard Armstrong (Ayot St Peter).....[richa2002@hotmail.com](mailto:richa2002@hotmail.com).....01438 715823

### PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL TREASURERS

Maggie Varco (St Mary's Welwyn).....[margaret.varco@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.varco@btinternet.com).....01438 715450

Simon Horne (Ayot St Peter).....[ayotstpeterchurch@gmail.com](mailto:ayotstpeterchurch@gmail.com).....

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## PUBLISHERS

St Mary's and St Michael's  
Churchwardens

## COVER

Punch and Judy on Singlers Marsh in  
2022. Picture supplied by Welwyn  
Festival Team.

## MAGAZINE ARTICLES

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## EDITORS' NOTES

**Please submit articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication.** We aim to publish reports and articles that will be of interest to our local community. If you would like to suggest a theme or article please email: [magazine@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:magazine@welwyn.org.uk)

*The Editors reserve the right to shorten or omit articles or refuse advertisements.*

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# The Rector's *Letter*



Dear Friends

As some of you may know I have a particular connection with St Alban. My curacy was served in a church dedicated to our first British martyr (therefore a good candidate for patron saint of the United Kingdom, a position currently vacant?) and I then went on to serve in our local Cathedral and Abbey church of St Alban. It is a very convincing story, and his day occurs this month, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June. This is the day upon which the Venerable Bede (one of our best sources for information about Alban) narrates that he was martyred. Bede dates his execution to the persecution of Diocletian in the early fourth century – though other sources dispute this, not least because Diocletian was only Emperor of the Eastern Empire.

The story is that Alban sheltered a Christian priest (traditionally called Amphibulus, though that simply means ‘cloak’) and was so impressed by his way of life that he converted to Christianity. When the soldiers came to arrest the priest, he fled and Alban appeared before them in his cloak, announcing that he was too a Christian. He was dragged before the magistrate who knew him well, and expected him to capitulate. Alban however was not for turning, famously announcing that ‘I worship and adore the true and living God.’ Reluctantly the judge condemned him to execution on the hill just below where the Abbey now stands. Legend has it that the first executioner was so impressed by Alban’s calm, that he refused to perform his duty, and was executed with him. In a detail much beloved of children and illustrated by Matthew Paris, when the second executioner carried out the double sentence his eyes popped out of his head.

So soon after St George’s Day and the Coronation I am slightly reluctant to say it, but Alban seems to me a rather more convincing and noble story. He was truly local, truly brave, not condescending to damsels in distress or cruel to dragons (venerated creatures in many cultures outside of Western Europe). As I say we could at least allow him to fill the vacant seat of Patron Saint of the United Kingdom.

*David*

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## Jessie the Rectory Dog

He's off again... I know that he has only just got back from Walsingham, but now he's off with his mates to race in Alsace. There are two things which are particularly mortifying about this sad situation. Firstly I have been to Alsace twice before. I could go – not thanks to our exclusion from the Pet Passport scheme, the only good thing a politician has done for dogs in the last 50 years (I know, I know, they abolished the dog licence). But still I could have gone. I love Alsace and have had some lovely walks there – the truth of the matter is that sadly he just does not want to take me. The second galling fact is that some of my best friends are Alsatians. Well to be precise I have one friend who is an Alsatian. I'd love to know more about his culture and beer – and yet, and yet.... It is a very sad state of affairs.



*Jess*

### **The Welwyn Magazine with Woolmer Green**

We hope that you enjoy reading the magazine each month. There are 10 issues per year. The annual subscriptions are due for collection in June.

The price will once again remain at 60p per issue, but if anyone would like to make an additional donation above £6, it will be gratefully received!

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# Thankyous

Readers may have noticed that a number of regular items are not in this month's magazine.

For the past 5 years we have had regular articles on the subjects of the Patients Participation Group (PPG) and the Welwyn Natural History Society (WNHS). We have to thank Sara Otty for the PPG articles and Judith Watson for the WNHS articles. Both Sara and Judith have put pen to paper regularly every month and I know from talking to readers that their articles have been very much appreciated. We are hoping that in future the PPG and WNHS will be able to find a member who will be able to supply similar articles.

Marj Otty as chairman of the Parish Council, has been providing monthly articles reporting on the activities of the Council. Marj is retiring from being Chairman and her last article was in the May Magazine. This month Bill Morris has kindly stepped in with a general article on how the Parish Council works. We are hoping that when the next Chairman is appointed he /she will be prepared to provide us with a regular article.

Brenda Bigland has been entertaining us with odes on the activities of the Mardley Heath WI. Brenda has now decided to stand down but has provided this month a final extended ode telling us about her encounter with the Prince of Wales (Prince Charles) when she was headmistress at a primary school in Slough.

Finally on behalf of the members of the Magazine Committee I would like to thank Jane Carr, who has decided to retire after having been on the Committee for many years. Jane has been a mainstay of the committee and will be sorely missed. Over the years she has coordinated and contributed to the production of the magazine. She has also organised its distribution and written many articles. Jane's awareness of what is going on in the village has been essential for us to produce a topical publication. On many occasions, when there has been a lack of material, Jane has stepped in and provided an article. Jane thank you.

Tony Keach

Editor

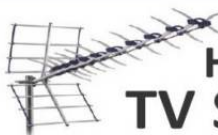
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## On the phone and on the road?

One of the unknowns for us writing these articles is who actually are our readers? There are hundreds of you, but sadly we only ever get to meet a few.



Many of you are drivers who are fully equipped with the latest smartphone. Some of you will not be drivers, and some will not yet have mobile phones. But you may travel occasionally as passengers in cars, you may have friends and relatives who drive, and you will observe drivers as you go about Welwyn or wherever you may be. So, we thought that it is about time that we addressed the topic of mobile phones in cars.

Since March 2022 there have been new laws about the use of handheld mobile phones at the wheel. If you break the law, you can get a £200 fine and six points on your licence. If taken to court, the fine could be as much as £1,000, and you could be banned from driving.

Use of a handheld mobile phone while driving is now illegal for almost any purpose. That includes using phone satnav, taking photos or videos, scrolling through music playlists, using streaming services or playing games. It is only legal if you are safely parked – and this does not include waiting in traffic or being stationary at the traffic lights.

Enforcement has been stepped up during recent years and the number of fines issued has risen by 10% over a year. That's more than 50 drivers a day in England and Wales. Hertfordshire police ran a campaign during February and March this year to raise awareness.

While we've listed the possible penalties for drivers if caught, readers will appreciate that our chief concern is the consequences for innocent victims of inattention by drivers resulting in accidents and injury. According to "THINK!" (the road safety campaign), drivers are four times more likely to be in a crash if they are using a phone. For drivers involved in an accident whilst using their mobile phone the penalties are severe and could even result in a custodial sentence.

John Mitchell and Valerie Richards  
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## Flaming June



June is the month that our gardens at Danesbury and QVM Hospital come into their own. All the effort and hard work put into their maintenance by our gardener really pays off to the great benefit of patients, their families and our staff.

These photos are of the beautiful spring flowers at QVM.

Thanks to the support which the Friends receive we can fund the gardener all year and buy the plants, garden supplies and equipment. We know it is money well spent.

This month also heralds the beginning of Welwyn Festival. As in previous years Danesbury will be hosting a stall at the Street Market and a toy stall on Fund Day on Singlers Marsh. Please come along for a chat and perhaps support this very worthwhile charity.

We hear that the Coronation parties at the Neurological Centre and at QVM were a great success. The Friends funded all the bunting, flags, music and food to give the patients and their visitors a special treat over the Coronation Weekend. We hope to have some photos to show you in our next issue.

This month we have also provided workbooks for the clinical psychologists here at Danesbury for use with their stroke patients.

Wishing you all a wonderful June.

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## Could you rescue a wild creature

If you find a sick or injured wild bird or animal, it can be difficult to know what to do for the best. In many cases, “letting nature take its course” is not the kindest option, but people sometimes lack confidence in their own ability to help.

Vulnerable creatures left in the open will be finished off by predators. The possible exception to this is baby birds – if you think they can fly, they may simply be waiting for their parents to bring food.

Most birds and small creatures can be safely housed in a cardboard box while you get advice on the best course of action.

Take great care with larger animals, they can be aggressive when frightened and in pain - it is often best to call for help and not try to move them.



Rescue centres are usually small charities run by volunteers. You should expect to take the casualty to them, unless it's a large animal that requires specialist transport. Also, it is kind to give them a donation if you

can.

Here are a few local centres that care for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife and can give advice to people who find distressed wild creatures:

Wildlife Welfare (Stevenage) aims to nurse animals back to health for release into the wild. In the summer their phone line is open seven days a week on 01438 313526. They also have a very helpful website with advice on many species - [www.wildlifewelfare.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewelfare.org.uk)



Hitchin Bird Rescue take all birds, including pigeons, and offer a forever home to those that cannot be released. Contact Neil on 07846 596427 or find them on Facebook.

Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary (Harpenden) release hedgehogs back into the wild after treatment but they also offer permanent homes to any that cannot be released. They have a helpful website at [www.hornbeamwood.org.uk](http://www.hornbeamwood.org.uk) or you can call them on 07999 573513.

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# Saturday Concert

**10 June at 12 noon**

**Tessa Uys** will give a piano recital at Welwyn St Mary's. Tessa has been a well-known figure on the UK and international classical music scene since the 1980s, making many CDs and broadcasts for the BBC. Her solo performances are always eagerly anticipated.



## Biography

Born in Cape Town into an exceptionally musical and theatrical family Tessa Uys is one of South Africa's most distinguished concert pianists. She was first taught by her mother Helga Bassel, herself a noted concert performer who fled to South Africa to escape Nazi persecution. Her father, Hannes Uys, was a formidable champion of choral music in South Africa and founder/director of one of the country's leading children's choirs.

Tessa Uys gave her first public performance at the age of seven and made her concerto debut at thirteen years old with the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra conducted by David Tidboald. At sixteen, whilst still at school, she won a Royals Schools Associated Board Scholarship and continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied with Gordon Green. Here she won many prizes, and in her final year was awarded the top prize, the Macfarren Medal. Further studies in London with Maria Curcio and in Siena, Italy with Guido Agosti. Shortly after this, Tessa Uys won the Royal Overseas League competition. During the past three decades, Tessa Uys has established herself an impressive reputation, both as concert performer and as a broadcasting artiste, performing at many of the major concert venues throughout the world. She is also in demand as examiner, teacher and adjudicator.

All Welwyn Second Saturday Recitals are free to attend; the proceeds of the retiring collections, after modest expenses, go to Church Funds.

Stephen Foster

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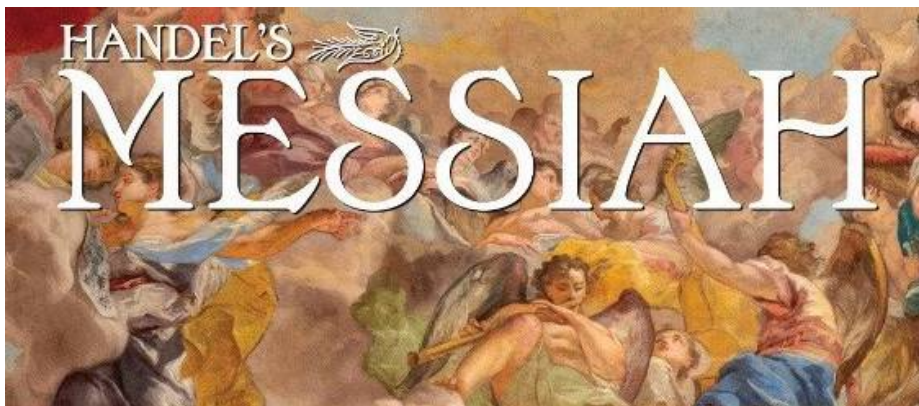
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**Come & Sing**

**Handel's Messiah**

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**St Mary's Church, Welwyn**

**Singers – 2pm**

(Email [milnerrobert1@me.com](mailto:milnerrobert1@me.com) to register interest)

**Performance – 6:30pm**

**Conductor: William Orr**

**Soprano: Rosanna Milner**

**Mezzo: Alla Alban**

**Tenor: Jeremy Hill**

**Bass: Robert Milner**

**Suggested donation: £15 from singers and audience**

Money raised over expenses will be used for development of music at St Mary's



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## Retirement of Church Warden

Sue Keach has just stepped down as Church Warden at Woolmer Green after a total of 15 years of service to the church and community. Sue was initially appointed by Alan Winton in 2002 and was Church Warden until 2008. She was subsequently reappointed in 2014 and has remained in the post until this year.

What do they say when a job needs doing? “Ask a busy person” and that is true of Sue.

We became a Training Parish some time ago. Sue has kindly settled six new curates into the village and helped them to find their way around their new community. There is always a period of time from one curate going and another arriving. These are called inter-regnums and can last many months. In these periods Sue has been a constant in the church. She is very good at keeping in touch with people and one could say that she is a “people person”. She is also a good cook and, many a time, there will be a knock on the door and a gift of food is presented to someone having a difficult time, which has been greatly appreciated.

Sue gets on quietly and without fuss with anything that needs to be done, whether in the church or in the community of Woolmer Green. The most recent has been the “Warm Space” in the Village Hall during the winter. She is very family orientated as well and is a busy grandmother. She enjoys reading and is passionate about support for Christian Aid.

It must also be said that Sue’s husband, Tony, has been a great support to her and St Michael’s has benefited from Tony’s DIY skills.

At the Service on the 7th of May Sue was presented with Thank You cards and a Voucher expressing the thanks and good wishes from everyone at St Michael’s.

Going forward, the jobs required of a Church Warden will need to be distributed amongst the wider congregation and I am sure St Michael’s will be serving the people of Woolmer Green for many years to come.

Christine Allday

# Welwyn Festival Programme 2023

## **FRIDAY 24th JUNE – SATURDAY 2nd JULY**

### **SATURDAY 24th June**

#### **THE STREET MARKET.**

**9.00am – 12.30pm** Over 60 stalls, plus the hurdy gurdy man.

### **SUNDAY 25th June**

#### **Welwyn Fun Runs in Panshanger Park in aid of Festival Charities**

**9.30am. 10km** . Chip timing, unique wooden medals for all finishers. For further details go to [www.welwyn10k.org.uk](http://www.welwyn10k.org.uk)

**9.40am. Family 2km.** For further details go to [www.welwyn10k.org.uk](http://www.welwyn10k.org.uk)

#### **Come and Sing Event.**

**2.00pm - 6.30 pm.** Handel's Messiah at St. Mary's Church See page 17 in this magazine for more information

#### **Walk Through Welwyn Quiz.**

**3.00 pm. – 5.00pm.** Meet outside the White Hart to collect your quiz pack. Come and and join in with the Welwyn Street Quiz. Working in teams of between 2 and 4 people, you will have 2 hours to search for solutions to pictorial, cryptic and other questions based on observation of features in the village streets. Have a well earned drink in the White Hart while your efforts are judged. There will be small prizes for the winning teams and the result will be announced by 17.30. Cost £5 person.

# Welwyn Festival Programme 2023

## MONDAY 26th June

**7.30pm** Discover Welwyn Village with Sandra and George. Welwyn is steeped in varied and interesting history. Join Sandra and George on their legendary guided walking tour (created by archaeologist and historian Tony Rook) and discover for yourself the rich, cultural and often amusing features of our very special village. Comfortable pace, approx 2 -2 ½ ours with midway stop for refreshments. Meet at Fire Station. In the event of heavy rain, please check with Sandra on 07802 725423 in case the walk has to be cancelled.

**8.00pm** Dr Roger Aubrey, 'Examples of prehistoric stones and religious art through the centuries to modern times'. Refreshments. Church House.

## TUESDAY 27th June

**7.30pm** Discover Welwyn Village with Sandra and George (for further detail please see Monday)

## WEDNESDAY 28th June

**8.00 pm – 10.00pm** . Welwyn Film Record Society. Films from 1972, 1987, 2002 Main Hall, Civic Centre.

## THURSDAY 29th June

**8.00pm – 10.00pm** . Welwyn Film Record Society. Films from 1978, 1993, 2008 Main Hall, Civic Centre.

## SATURDAY 1st July

**11.00am - 6.00pm** Digswell Arts Fellows and Print Members in Hertford Road, Digswell, AL6 0BU invite you to meet them in their studios. Not normally open to the public, you will have the opportunity to look behind the scenes and chat with the artists about their creative processes. A range of

# Welwyn Festival Programme

contemporary art will be exhibited, including sculpture, printmaking and painting. Work will also be available to purchase. Free event

## THE FANCY DRESS PARADE

**12.50 pm for 1.00 pm start** 1960/70s from the High Street to Singlers Marsh

## FAMILY FUN DAY

**1.00pm - 5.00pm** - Singlers Marsh, Codicote Road

Classic Cars on the Marsh

Plus the old favourites : Punch and Judy, children's rides, tea tent, face painting, ice creams, beer tent, plate smash, tombola, raffle etc.

## FUN DAY ARENA PROGRAMME

Judging of Fancy Dress

Pubs and Social Clubs 'Tug of War' Competition

Dog Show entrants assemble by the arena

Scruffs Dog Show

Kid's Races and Tug of War

Big Raffle Prize Draw

Duck Race by 1st Welwyn Scouts and Guides on the

River Mimram, Singlers Marsh. Race starts at 4.45pm. 2000 race ready ducks will head down the Mimram from the tea tent to the bridge Prizes £50, £25 and £10.

Tickets available via 1st Welwyn Scouts website, at Street Market, the QVM Charity Shop and Fun Day itself,

## SUNDAY 2nd July

11am - 4pm Digswell Arts Fellows and Print Members in Hertford Road, Digswell, AL6 0BU invite you to meet them in their studios. Not normally open to the public, you will have the opportunity to look behind the scenes and chat with the artists about their creative processes. A range of contemporary art will be exhibited, including sculpture, printmaking and painting. Work will also be available to purchase. Free event



# Welwyn Festival Programme

## SUNDAY 9th JULY

### **11.00am until 4.00pm** Welwyn Tennis Open Day

Event includes free coaching and use of the courts facilities for juniors and adults. Just turn up on the day, rackets and balls can be provided. There is also a 30% off membership offer on the day.

*We have retired Cuckoo in the Nest, but instead there will be a family-friendly quiz trail in Welwyn Village using a free app 'What3Words' to navigate from clue to clue.*

*Correct entries will go into a draw in two age groups 4-7 years and 8-11 years. There will be prizes!*

*On the 24th of June a printed version including details on how to participate will be available on the Welwyn Festival Stand at the Street Market or from our website.*

## Parish Registers

### **St Mary's Welwyn**

#### **Funeral Service**

27th April

Lilian Joyce Small

Burial at Trent Park Enfield

### **Harwood Park**

19th April

Clara Jean Slater



## Summary of Rector's report at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

2022 began as church life was recovering from a new variant of the Covid-19 virus that had almost closed churches for their Christmas services. But the New Year marked the first time in two years in which churches and their activities began to return to normal. This was not with immediate effect and many activities did not return to pre-pandemic levels and indeed still have not done so, particularly work with children and families. As ever more volunteers are needed to help with that work.

Then Russia invaded Ukraine which is still having tragic consequences. War in Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is almost unbelievable. Welwyn and Woolmer Green continue to host refugees from that conflict and thanks go out from our churches to those who were and those who remain involved. A church vigil at the beginning of the conflict greatly increased awareness of what was unfolding in Ukraine and people responded generously with offers of hosting, goods, services and cash. This continued throughout the year – recently an ambulance that was bought with donated funds set off for Ukraine laden with goods from Welwyn and Woolmer Green donors. Much of the money used to buy the ambulance and contents was raised through St Mary's and St Michael's fund raising efforts, not least the pantomime.

As we all know, that war led to a big increase in the cost of fuel and power.

The churches played their part by providing warm spaces in both Welwyn and Woolmer Green as well as supporting local food banks and by making 'open table' goods available to the local community. However, the churches themselves are not immune from these cost increases. One estimate suggests that the utility bills over both churches could be as much as £23,000 more in 2023 than in 2022. It is also estimated that this year the parish will incur a loss of about £35,000 due to increased costs, so clearly there is a need to increase income. Ways in which you could help: If you donate regularly could you increase your regular giving? If regular donors increased their donations by 10% it would raise £14,000 more annual income. If you donate occasionally could you consider signing up for regular giving? If fifteen new donors signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme, donating £50/month with Gift Aid, it would raise an additional £11,250 annual income. Are you able to make a one-off donation or remember St Mary's or St Michael's in your will?

In May our churches again supported some of the poorest people in the world outside Europe by raising funds for Christian Aid. The annual quiz is a good contributor to this effort and will take place again in 2023 and it is hoped that a sponsored swim will also contribute significantly this year. Details of these events were published in last month's magazine on pages 20 and 21.

All told, last year our parish raised in excess of £17,000 for local and international charities.

Turning to some of the brighter events of last year, we welcomed our new curates Christie and Ryan Gilfeather who have had a great start to their ministry in Welwyn and Woolmer Green. Christie was rather 'thrown in at the deep end' when the Rector tested positive for Covid at 10 pm on the evening prior to the renewed children's Holiday Club. At very short notice Christie took over and led the team, managing a good number of children (or should that be a number of good children?) for a week that was as full of fun, learning and fellowship as previous Holiday Clubs have been. In addition to their ministry duties Christie and Ryan are both undertaking PhDs and both are due to be ordained as priests by Bishop Jane of Hertford at a service to be held at St Mary's on Sunday July 2<sup>nd</sup>. You are invited to attend.

In September Mr Robert Milner joined St Mary's as Director of Music. The choir and organ are flourishing under his guidance. We are particularly pleased that he has re-started the junior choir and, together with the Rector, has introduced choral scholarships. Additionally St Mary's is delighted to host a series of concerts on the second Saturday of the month organised by Stephen Foster, while St Michael's continues to be grateful to Penny Howes who leads their choir and music.

The parish continues to benefit financially from the use of St Michael's for their services by the Romanian Ortho-

dox Church, who have proven to be a caring and faithful community. There were concerns that some might leave our church and join theirs but apparently the prospect of services beginning at 5:30 am has had a deterrent effect.

Then there was the joy and pleasure of the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee followed only a few short months later by the sadness of her death. After a life of the most extraordinary service inspired by her deep Christian faith some may well consider that there is a case to be made for the Church of England to make her a saint.

Talking of saints, Mary Westley is retiring after twenty years outstanding service as head of Welwyn St Mary's School. Stuart Whiteland, currently head at All Saints school at Datchworth, has been chosen to continue where Mary left off, starting in September. Mary will be a hard act to follow although whether the Church of England will make her a saint is less certain.

Sue Keach is retiring as Church Warden at Woolmer Green after being in the post for fifteen years. There is a separate tribute to Sue on page 19

On the subject of retirements Canon Philip Waller will retire at the beginning of September. Many thanks go to Philip from the people of Codicote for his ministry and best wishes for his retirement.

Précised by David Hughes  
5th May 2023

# ONLY THE LONELY

“Know the way I feel tonight  
Only the Lonely  
Know this feeling ain’t right”

Some of us may remember this song written by Roy Orbison in 1960. The lyrical context was of romantic love but the underlying issue of a feeling which “ain’t right” is relevant today in a much wider context.

The US surgeon general has called loneliness a “profound public health challenge”. According to Dr Rangan Chaterjee, a British GP, “loneliness is on the rise and people with fewest social ties were three times more likely to die prematurely than those with most. Being lonely means you are 30% more likely to have a stroke or a heart attack. High social stress is an even bigger risk factor for dying from a chronic disease than physical inactivity, alcohol intake and smoking combined.”

Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology and health at Manchester Business School, says “Men have always had a problem with loneliness because they often have trouble establishing close relationships outside the family”. Thirty years ago when I first moved into School Lane it was very noticeable that single women, whether widows, divorcees or unmarried, would walk down to the High Street in pairs whereas single men were always alone. More recently I have observed that the women also walk alone. Is there a loneliness epidemic migrating to women as well?

Loneliness is an affliction often closely associated with old age but research contradicts this. 20% of 35 to 44 year olds feel lonely compared with 13% of over 65s while 18 to 34 year olds are more likely to feel lonely than the over 55s. Many reasons for this are postulated: working from home, social interactions dominated by social media, and for men the decline of pub culture, for instance. For me the biggest social divide is not skin colour, creed, ethnicity or politics; it is generational. Pubs and clubs are either for the old or young and there seem to be few locations where all generations can easily mix, get to know each other and simply have fun.

The Times recently ran some stories of individual experiences of loneliness. A leading journalist had a 29 year old son who took his life because of loneliness. The father was unable to help because he also was lonely. A writer became lonely after her son left for university and a subsequent divorce soon made it worse. She

# ONLY THE LONELY

couldn't bear the prospect of being pitied, felt isolated and would go out by herself into the city centre merely to be among people but with whom she had no contact. Her acute loneliness gave rise to chest pains which, fortunately, were not indicative of a heart condition but nonetheless were still very unpleasant. And then a thirty three year old single female writer who shared a flat with a previously unknown flat mate and who simply enjoyed the vicarious company of the noises coming from her flatmate's social life, having no successful social life of her own. Gym life resolved nothing; as she rightly says it is hard to strike up a conversation puffing on a treadmill. She gets more pleasure talking to people on a dog-borrowing app.

I know two older people, one a lady in her late eighties and the other a man in his mid-nineties, who find loneliness so excruciating that they both openly express their wish to die. The lady has mobility issues and emerging dementia. She has carers who are very kind but she never goes out and sometimes would call me in the early hours simply because she was desperate for some conversation. The man is physically fit for his age and mentally competent but suffers from poor eyesight and hearing. These disabilities prevent him from doing what he enjoys; he is very capable with computerised images and he used to enjoy books and listening to music. He is surrounded by a large and loving family but this does not prevent the feeling of isolation. His deafness means he cannot join in family conversations. The combination of boredom and loneliness is lethal.

In Welwyn the church and its community, with its lunches, the community café, Fellowship etc. provide much support for older people in the village. I (determinedly not part of the church community) and others welcome this and, insofar as our different beliefs permit, support it. But it seems to me that this represents only a small part of our community and, if the data is correct, we are missing out those younger generations who are most prone to loneliness and who perhaps have a greater need than us for support. In a society which in too many respects has become afragmented, how do we resolve this? The answers are not easy to find but we would live in a happier world if we could.

Barry Northrop

## **KING CHARLES III – THE DAY ONE SCHOOL MET THEIR “PRINCE CHARMING”**

Now the coronation has happened, fond memories return  
Of a visit once made to a school where a future King would learn  
Of how young children were taught to strive for the “best”  
To achieve well, but have fun as well was the test  
How did this happen to a school in Slough?  
We certainly didn’t call ourselves highbrow  
We loved what we did to make school a joy  
No one was left out, not a single girl or boy  
So the Head was invited to meet the Prince one day  
She went to Highgrove, he wanted to hear what she had to say  
He gave 100 primary schools a challenge we rose to  
It was one we never had cause to rue  
To use our “best” teachers to train the rest  
So that we could give the Nation the “best of the best”  
We went back one year later to show what we had done  
And the Headteacher issued a public invitation as a bit of fun  
As the poet said, “Come friendly bombs and drop on Slough”  
She invited him to visit the friendliest “bomb” who ran a school there now!  
He was due to visit when sadly his grandmother died  
And we acknowledged that we would be put aside  
But no, he honoured his promise to 420 children, to all of us  
Oh boy, did the press want to make a fuss!  
We gave him a visit full of fun and laughter  
We heard his laugh as it hit the rafter  
He made ladybirds with children who were four years old  
The Head even took him to see the cartoons on the toilet wall - she was so  
bold!

He put tiny cakes in his pocket for later, to fill him to the brim  
And we gave him a chair to protect his bad back, we looked after him  
He attended an assembly where the children had written a special prayer  
They wanted him to enjoy his life and to take care  
They asked God to protect him, let him have a ball  
But keep him safe, don't let him off his polo pony fall  
His security wanted to keep the world outside our fence  
After all they did have reason to be tense  
But he was adamant that families should be a part of the children's day too  
They loved him for his friendliness and warmth, then sadly we had to bid him  
adieu  
We sent him the ladybird he had made at school  
We hope it made him smile, we thought it was really cool  
The children were so excited to meet this very special man  
He was kind and funny and each person he met soon became a fan  
Charles is definitely a peoples' King  
And our children loved our "Prince Charming"  
He listens and actively engages with the things he hears  
And has been able to make a difference throughout the years  
I offered never to wash my cheek after his kiss goodbye  
He laughed as he suggested that I should try!  
May his reign peace and joy to him bring  
And with others I say, God save the King!

Brenda Bigland CBE

# Woolmer Green Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting

The Woolmer Green Annual Parish Meeting was held on 18 April at the Village Hall. The Parish Council was joined by our Borough Councillors and County Councillor and some members of the public. It was an opportunity to review the 2022/23 year and the achievements and to look ahead to 2023/24 and discuss issues from around the village.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Andy Gribble, thanked all the councillors in attendance and particularly thanked the Clerk, Janet Pearce, who continues to do so much to keep Woolmer Green and the Parish Council running smoothly.

He also announced that the Woolmer Green Parish Shield would be presented to local resident, Jenny Hawkins, for her fabulous work in maintaining the village planters. They get so many compliments and are always a cheerful welcome to the village. The main project that the Parish Council had delivered in 2022 had been the refurbishment of the tennis court which is now available for anyone to use free of charge.



County Councillor Tony Kingsbury spoke about his work for Woolmer Green. Each year he is allocated some budget to use for the areas he covers and he noted that his highways funding had been used to resurface the end of Mardleybury Road in 2022. In 2023/24 he will fund the removal of the dropped kerb at The Chequers where the former car park entrance has been closed off. There was a discussion about the proposals in the Safer Routes to School plans and it is hoped that some of the plans can be put into place soon.

Woolmer Green resident, Judith Watson, kindly gave an update on behalf of St Michael's church to the meeting. The church had welcomed a new curate, Rev'd Christie Gilfeather, during the year and had successfully provided a Warm Welcome space at the Village Hall over the winter months. It has also hosted a food table in the church for those who need it. She thanked the Parish Council for the grant given to the church and expressed thanks to Jackie Castle from the Red Lion for her fund raising and raffles in aid of the church.





*John Spinks*

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# Woolmer Green Parish Council

## Parish Council election results

Parish Councillors are elected for a 4 year term and it was the end of the current councillors' term of office in 2023. All of us decided to stand again for another four year term and as we were the only candidates no election was required and we have all been re-appointed.

The Woolmer Green Parish Councillors for the next 4 years will be Phil Corke, Tim Dix, Andy Gribble, Sarah Hall, Rob Horton and Grant Pinney. At the May Parish Council Meeting, which has not taken place at the time of writing, we will assign roles to the councillors so there will be an update on that next month.

**Sarah Hall**

**Woolmer Green Parish Council**

**sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk**

## Community Lunch is back

The Welwyn village community lunch team are delighted to share the good news (which you may already have heard!) that our special "Everyone is Welcome, community lunch" has restarted with gusto! And it's fabulous to once again see familiar and, we're pleased to say, some new faces.

Our lunch started several years before the pandemic; a chance to get together once a month with friends and neighbours.

At 1.00pm we meet in the Church House for a glass of something white, red or fruity! Then follows a little appetiser to get the taste buds going. Each month we serve a different main course and fudding, finishing with tea or coffee.

Every month we post the date and the menu for the lunch on the Church railings and in other places around the village.

We ask you to book, please, by putting £15 in an envelope and handing it into Danesbury Charity Shop. Write your name and your telephone contact on the envelope and if you've a special dietary request, write that on there too. We give £2 per person of this to our lovely St Mary's Church for their Church Fabric Fund.

Look forward to seeing you all at the next lunch!

Dates: June 26<sup>th</sup>, July 31<sup>st</sup>, Sept 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> and Nov 27<sup>th</sup> – All Mondays at 1.00pm!

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We invited people, via facebook, to send us photographs of their street parties . Only one person responded. We are pleased to publish one of the photographs sent in by Mat Lutkin of one of his sons enjoying his tea at the Welwyn Street Party



### Herts at War project

“D Day Bombers The Veterans’ Story”

Steve Darlow

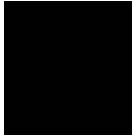
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# A military hero and a cricketer at Ayot St Peter

At the back of the old churchyard in Ayot St Peter is a stone in the style of a Celtic cross, with the badge of the Kings Own Royal Rifle Corps near the base of the stem, inscribed: *Capt. Christopher Egerton Balfour, D.S.O. born 14 August 1872, served in the defence of Ladysmith and throughout the Boer War, died 29 August 1907.*



The burial register records that Capt. Balfour's address was Sherrards, Welwyn, the home of his uncle, Robert Drummond Balfour, his father's brother. According to a newspaper article from the time, Capt. Balfour had been suffering from a long illness, and moved to Welwyn to stay with his uncle to see if the change of air would be beneficial.

Christopher Egerton Balfour entered the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1893, becoming a lieutenant in 1896 and later captain. He served briefly in India and then in South Africa, where he was in Ladysmith during the siege, and was appointed aide-de-camp to Sir Neville Lyttelton. Capt. Balfour was awarded his DSO for services in South Africa. He married Dorothy Cecilia Paget in 1902 and their first daughter Cecilia Chrystina was born in 1903. A second daughter, May Lettice, was born in 1907 shortly after her father's death.

Several of the Balfours were good cricketers, including Capt. Balfour's father Archibald, who played for the MCC, and Robert Drummond who played for Cambridge University and the MCC. Robert Drummond Balfour played for Scotland against the Gentlemen of Surrey at the Oval in July 1865. This is recognised as the first ever "capped" game by Scotland (ie. a representative 11 a side match).

In recent years, national cricket teams have allocated a number to their players to show the order in which they represented their country. Scotland have followed this trend, allocating numbers right back to that first ever game. As Robert Drummond Balfour was the player whose name came closest to the start of the alphabet, he was allocated player number 1, although of course this happened after his death. Interestingly, the Balfours did not seem to have any close link to Scotland, and experts at Cricket Scotland believe that Robert was probably asked by a cricketing friend to "make up the numbers".

Robert Drummond Balfour and his wife Catherine Elizabeth are buried in Welwyn Cemetery.

Valerie Richards

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## Welwyn Parish Council



You will have read in last month's article by Marj Otty that she is stepping down as Chair, with a new Chair to be elected by Councillors following the recent elections (more of which later). So, with no contributor immediately available, the Magazine's whippers-in have dragged-in this scribe to deliver this month's Parish Council article!

My first duty must be to thank Marj for keeping us in line during her term of office. She took over the reins as Chair from me and I must say that she has done a super job. It's not that councillors are unruly or difficult to control but we are opinionated, eager to advance our views and above all want to do our best for our community. Marj has guided us gently back to the topic in hand, yet allowed all to have our legitimate say. She has worked behind the scenes with clerks to ensure that administration runs smoothly and we have been a better Council for her leadership. It is excellent that she will remain a councillor for Oaklands ward.

By the time you read this, the Local Elections will have been and gone and we will have new councils and members at both parish and borough levels, so I thought I'd use this opportunity to ruminate on local democracy and local government. Why is this important when so much decision-taking and power is centralised at Westminster (or even at County)? In my view it is precisely for that reason. All national governments tend to be control freaks and restrict all the important matters and decisions to themselves, so "local" matters (i.e. regarding the area one loves and where one usually lives) could be relegated to seeming insignificance when running the country. So very local matters (arguably trivial ones on the national scale but significant locally) were decreed the province of local government, which over many years evolved into our present four tier system: national, then councils at county, borough (or district) and parish (or town) level. Many countries have an equivalent system but the areas of responsibility and authority vary, as do the ability to tax and to invest.

Continued on page 40



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# Welwyn Parish Council

Continued from page 38

Local government (which has quite considerable powers) is meant to alleviate the gap between the rarified air-breathing, ambrosia-sipping MPs and us hoi polloi, bringing the electorate closer to their elected representatives, who should be better-placed to deal with local issues. We are fortunate that our MP, despite being a cabinet minister, remains close to his constituency and takes an active interest in local issues. Equally, our County Councillor is not only a Borough Councillor, but like all of our Borough and Parish Councillors, resides within the parish (one exception lives a stone's throw outside the boundary). I don't want to turn this into a grand back-slapping exercise nor be accused of lauding any political party (the reasons why an area returns elected members of any specific party are way beyond this article's scope and my pay grade – "Philosophy Politics and Economics" was never my subject). Irrespective of any party allegiance, we all do our best to represent residents' interests.

Welwyn Parish Council has 11 councillors (2 each from Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and 5 from Welwyn village – not a major exercise in gerrymandering but the results of the independent Electoral Commission's consideration of the population distribution and the "ideal" number of elected members per capita). Election frequency and scope vary nationally and in Welwyn we elect all parish councillors every four years. To support or provide for local democracy I think two things are needed – people who are prepared to stand as councillors and people who are prepared to demonstrate interest and elect them by voting. It is a great pity that local elections across England are generally poorly-supported: few are prepared to offer themselves as representatives and many people are unwilling to extract themselves from their homes to go to vote, photo ID or not. In our recent elections, for two Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council seats the turnout for Welwyn East ward was 35.7% and for Welwyn West, 41.3%. The results could have been completely different if more had voted (a postal vote means absence or mobility issues does not lead to disenfranchisement).

Continued on page 42



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# Welwyn Parish Council

Continued from page 40

At parish council level, if at election time we have 11 candidates for our 11 “seats” then there is no need for an election per se and all candidates are deemed to be elected. That is what happened this year. If we have fewer than 11 candidates then those standing are deemed to be elected and we then need to fill any vacancies by co-opting individuals. This inevitably raises possible issues of personal bias, skewing of council make-up and cronyism (none of which I have ever witnessed) but it is not a satisfactory long-term solution or one to be oft-repeated. Regrettably, across the country, parish councils have many co-opted members. In our case, if more than 11 candidates offer themselves (or more than one at a by-election caused by resignation or any other reason) then a proper election is required. However, we can never anticipate a “no election” situation and all prospective councillors – both incumbents and newcomers, have to register using the most infuriatingly complex, confusing and repetitious form (I think some bureaucrat specially designed it to put people off). Thanks to our clerk, Caroline, who guided us all through the process and helped enormously with questions; as it happened it was not required.

There is a further reason why it is important to elect and not co-opt: the Localism Act 2011 introduced the General Power of Competence (GPC) for Local Councils. This considerably widened their scope and capabilities but it has to be applied for and the qualification criteria are that two thirds or more councillors have to be elected and the clerk must hold at least one of the sector-specific qualifications. Welwyn Parish Council has held the GPC for a number of years.

A parish election costs around £10K (a charge levied by the Borough Council for undertaking all the necessary mechanics including publicity, printing, polling supervision and vote counting) and although we would rather not spend that and continue to retain it in our reserves for another time, that is no reason to restrict democratic choice and deny a properly representative council.

Continued on page 44

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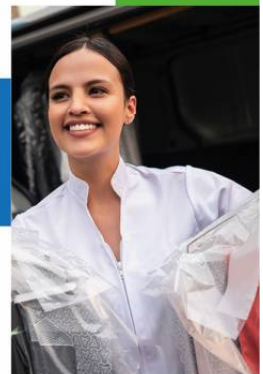
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# Welwyn Parish Council

Continued from page 42

Our Council, like many/most parish councils, is essentially non-political in that we do not divide on any party lines (indeed many do not declare any party allegiance). We try to steer things for the benefit of the community we represent. Being naïve as to “politics” or council workings should not be a barrier – I was, at the outset, but had excellent guidance from (then) existing councillors especially the late John Blackburn. So please consider if you can offer yourself as a potential councillor in the future. If you can’t put in the time (and it does take personal time – meeting attendance, reading and preparation, discussions and thinking) please consider coming along to either Full Council or committee meetings (all are open to the public and their dates and agendas are on our website).

Individual councillors or a council collectively can sometimes be subjected to criticism and worse in social media. Perhaps those doing the mud-slinging might like to step up and be a part of the solution for the criticism, which is often largely unwarranted? In democracy you get what you are prepared to do to support or defend. You don’t need to look too hard around our world to see countries where criticism of those in power is not tolerated and representation is anything but universal or equal. The aforementioned rigmarole of our little local election makes it easy to understand Churchill’s observation that democracy is the worst form of government – except for all the others that have been tried. Although his observation was made having just lost the 1945 General Election, it holds true at all levels – you get what you pay for and what you are prepared to fight for, or at least participate in.

I hope this article sheds some light on the seemingly arcane aspects of local councils. The next article will be penned by our new Chair, whoever they may be; I look forward to working under their leadership! Now, back to trying to pull the Neighbourhood Plan together – the subject of another article I think!

**Bill Morris**

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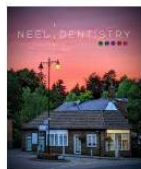
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Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday	9.30 am	Parish Communion / Junior Church
Sunday	6.30 pm	Evensong (2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	9.30 am	Holy Communion
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## Meditation Three and One

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Critics of the Christian faith often make reference to the great councils of Nicea and Chalcedon that formulated that doctrine of the Trinity as being a departure from a more simple faith in Jesus of Nazareth as messianic prophet, and, constructing a Greek philosophical view of God at odds with such simple faith. In the wake of certain “quests for the historical Jesus” in the last few hundred years it has become commonplace for this charge to be made. However despite this often modern and critical assault upon traditional Christianity there are still grounds for belief in Christ revealed as Incarnate Son of God and a thorough Trinitarian doctrine that can be defended on biblical and historical grounds.

Reformed theologian Jurgen Moltmann has written a lot on the Trinity related to Creation, Salvation and the greater completion of the Kingdom of God still to come. There is the Word who expresses the character and will of the Father and has always addressed human minds, who became joined to humanity in Jesus, and the Spirit in co-operative work breathed and empowering all life and their combined life of self-giving love. This is what it really means for us to have “the image of God” as part of our make-up. God is communal and one, and we are communal beings drawn in their unity and so also drawn into new relationships together.

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## WELWYN MAGAZINE e:mail: [magazine@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:magazine@welwyn.org.uk)

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	Joyce Davis.....	01438 717567	
	Nita Gowans.....	01438 717609	
	Peter Branchflower.....	01438 717965	
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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - June 2023

6th and 20th	11.00am / 2.00pm	Dementia Friendly Community Cafe	Dementia Friendly Community Café Contact: Jane Andrews 01770 240 650 jane.andrews@homeinstead.co.uk	Digswell Hall 30 Harmer Green Lane, Welwyn
7th	2.00pm	Welwyn Floral Group	A wonderful world Lee Berrill joycefurssedonn7@virginmedia.com	Civic Centre Welwyn
8th	8.00pm	Garden Club Welwyn	Gardens of Easton Lodge tony@aacoxall.plus.com	Civic Centre, Main Hall Welwyn
10th	12 noon		Lunch Time Concert	St Mary's Church Welwyn
11th	10.00am / 1.30pm	Welwyn Craft and Farmers Market	Craft and Farmers Market clerk@welwynpc.org.uk - 01438 716667	Civic Centre Welwyn
13th	2.30pm	Fellowship St Mary's Welwyn	Painters in their Own Pictures? Geoff Bennett marcia.khan.emk@gmail.com	St Mary's Church House Welwyn
15th	10.00am	Danesbury Fernery and Nature Reserve Work Group	Fernery: gardening and maintenance Nature Reserve: clearing and habitat Management chairman@danburyferny.org.uk	Nature Reserve, Fernery Field (top North Ride) Welwyn
15th	7.30pm	W.I Mardley Heath	Poisons for Medicine -Victorian Pharmacists and Quack Doctors - Graham Harrison Jean Stephens 01438 714693 / Brenda Thomas 01438 716571; secretary.mhw@gmail.com	Oaklands Primary School Welwyn
15th	7.30pm	W.I Digswell	Say it with Flowers Joyce Fursedonn Dimitry.castellano@hotmail.com	Village Hall Digswell
15th	7.00pm for 7.30pm	Herts at War project	D Day Bombers The Veterans Story www.hertsatwar.co.uk/events	Civic Centre Welwyn
18th	11.00am	Rubbish Action Group Welwyn	Rubbish Action Group Collecton Contact: Sarah Butcher 07885 875977 welwynrubbishactiongroup@gmail.com	Car Park opposite Welwyn Drs Surgery
23rd / 2nd July		Welwyn Festival	Welwyn Week See pages 20 to 23	
25th	9.00am	Village Market Woolmer Green	Food and Craft Village Market https://www.facebook.com/farmersmarketwoolmergreen/	Village Hall Woolmer Green
28th	8.00 pm	Welwyn Natural History Society	More about moths watson.winfield@btopenworld.com	Civic Centre Welwyn
Tuesdays	10.00am / 12 noon	Community Café	Contact: Liz Hesketh 07825 093855	St Mary's Church House Welwyn
Second Wednesday of month	2.30pm/ 3.45pm	Afternoon Book Club	Contact: Joan Spruce 01438 840821	St Mary's Church House Welwyn
Thursdays	2.00pm/ 3.00pm	Arpeggio Bell Ringers	Contact: Paulline Anderson 01438 716783	St Mary's Church House Welwyn
Thursdays	7.00pm / 10.00pm	Welwyn Bridge Club	Contact: Cheri Pemberton 01438 360522	St Mary's Church House Welwyn
Saturdays	10.00am / 11.30am	Fairtrade Café	Contact: Maggie Varco 01438 715450	St Mary's Church House Welwyn