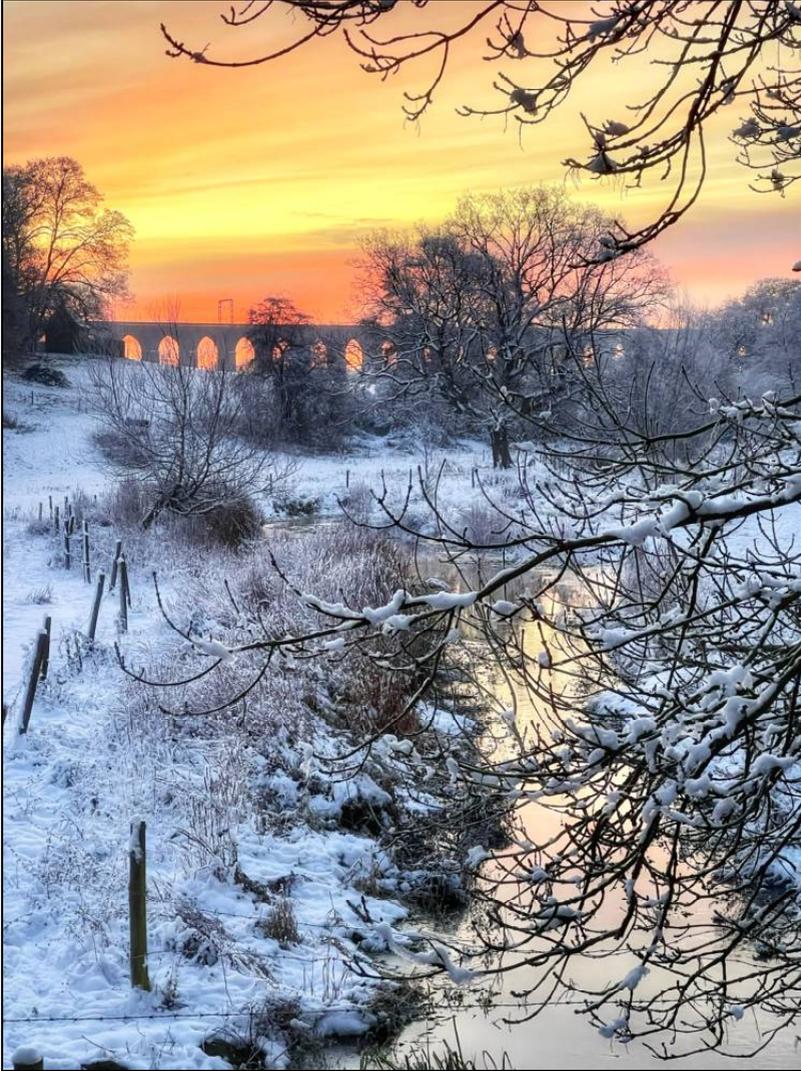


The Welwyn Magazine

with Woolmer Green



February 2023

60p

CONTENTS

February 2023

PUBLISHERS

St Mary's and St Michael's
Churchwardens

COVER

Digswell Viaduct at sunrise
by Ian Blair

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Our Vibrant Communities	3/5
The Rector's letter	7
Rt Revd Alan Winton Retires	9/11
Snippets	13
20 mph Limits	15
Welwyn Street Party - King Charles III	17
Parish Registers	17
Welwyn Natural History Society.....	19
Bible Discovery's Gifts to Ukraine	20/21
Welwyn's Craft & Farmers Market.....	21
Nothing ever happens in February!	22
Friends of Danesbury and QVM	23
The sad demise of Reuben Nobbs.....	24/25
Stories in glass at Ayot St Peter	26
Jubilee Tree Planting at St Michael's.....	27
PCC Report - 27th November 2022.....	28/29
Christmas appeal for funds for Gombards.....	29
Woolmer Green Parish Council	30
Mardley Heath WI	32/34
Reading Well - PPG.....	36
Jessie the Rectory Dog	36
Welwyn Parish Council.....	38/40
Oaklands Post Office update	40
New lives at the zoo	42/44
Church Notice Boards.....	46
Love is.....Meditation	48

EDITOR'S NOTES

Articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication, see details below.

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:

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

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Our Vibrant Communities

Welwyn and Woolmer Green continue to thrive despite the economic downturn, and that is due in no small part to the many people who make our communities flourish and largely pleasant places to live.

Welwyn has three identities, the Village, Oaklands and Digswell each retaining its own character, making up the sum of the whole. You can join the Floral Group, Archaeological Society, Garden Club, Fellowship Group, Fernery Working Party, Rubbish Action Group, Women's Institute, Natural History Society, Bridge Club or Big Breakfast. Or you could go to the weekly Community Café in Church House, or the monthly Community Lunch, and there is also the twice-monthly Dementia-Friendly Community Café in Digswell. Details of these activities are always shown on the back cover of this magazine. There are various exercise and dance classes in the many different halls and the Sports and Social Club has fabulous facilities with an excellent programme of entertainment. There are tennis courts in Welwyn village, in Digswell and Woolmer Green, not to mention sport on the playing fields in several locations. There are also the allotments in both Welwyn and Woolmer Green. So, lots to do!

The shops continue to provide a great service, particularly to those who cannot easily get about. How many other villages have a bakery where the bread is baked at the back of the shop? We have several independent shops selling ladies' fashion, gifts and jewellery, wine, flowers, violins and a travel agent. We have hairdressers, beauty salons and nail bars. It is amazing what you can find in your local super/mini-market with Tesco in Welwyn village and Woolmer Green, Welwyn North Stores serving Digswell, and Mardley Stores at Oaklands. In Woolmer Green we also have a chocolate factory with its own shop and café, and the new shopping parade is a welcome addition to this community.

For something a little bit different there are also monthly Farmers and Craft Markets in Welwyn Village and Woolmer Green Village Hall. In the next three years we should also be able to buy wine from the new Lokkelebery Vineyard being established at Lockley Farm.

There is a GP surgery in Welwyn village, two pharmacies, two dentists and a vet practice and we now have several defibrillators that are accessible 24/7 in case of suspected cardiac emergency. Last year we welcomed the Turkish Barber in the old post office and in January a Hearing Clinic opened in

continued on p5

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Our Vibrant Communities *continued from p3*

the building opposite St Mary's Church, and work continues in the old Barclays building to create a restaurant. We also said goodbye to hairdressers Peter Morgan and Headmistress who have been in the village a long time. The lack of bank and post office is keenly felt in Welwyn village but we are lucky still to have a post office at Oaklands and wish Jay and Sangita a happy retirement as Mary and Philip take over the business from them.

And then there are the pubs, restaurants, takeaways and places to meet for coffee in all locations such that we are spoilt for choice, many within walking distance from home and some providing live music, pub quizzes and the like.

The Codicote Food Bank started during Covid to help bridge the food gap in our local communities and the surrounding villages. The help they provide is invaluable to many as inflation rises and wages are not keeping pace. Food donations can be made in St Mary's Church and Belvoir in Welwyn village. There are also open food tables in both St Mary's and St Michael's churches where people can help themselves if they are at risk of going hungry. Church House in Welwyn is providing a warm space from 9 am – 2 pm daily whilst Woolmer Green Village Hall is doing the same on Mondays from 1.30 – 3.30 pm.

We have primary schools in all locations, a community library in the Civic Centre and various groups in the scouting and guiding movements. There is a regular bus service and Gordon at the Delistop Café at Welwyn North Station is doing a great job of letting us know via social media which trains are running during the rail strikes. There are also others telling us when steam trains are going through, if we want to relive our childhood.

Our Parish Councils do a great job of looking after much of the infrastructure often with little thanks, so we should take this opportunity of thanking them for the work they do, mostly on a voluntary basis. In Welwyn we also have WPAG (Welwyn Planning and Amenity Group), a charity set up in 1964 to monitor and lobby to improve amenities throughout the Civic Parish of Welwyn to maintain its unique character; again those involved do this important work on a voluntary basis. Currently they are spearheading the application to achieve village green status for Singlers Marsh, and keeping a close eye as the Borough Council's Local Plan is developed.

Inevitably there are gripes from time-to-time, but is this a good enough advertisement extolling the virtues of living here?

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The Rector's Letter

Dear Friends

I am lucky enough to generally enjoy good health, and as so often, I rather take it for granted. My day to day life is predicated on being healthy, and being able to get on with the day's tasks as I wish. So that when I am ill or injured I get rather grumpy and frustrated. But perhaps the worst thing about illness or, in particular, an injury, is the way it means you can think about little else.

It is as if life is on hold until you get better. And say for instance, you pull a muscle in your foot, suddenly it feels as though your whole body is affected not just your foot. You had probably not spent much time thinking about how your foot helps you to get around, until it doesn't, and then it is all you can think about.

Many philosophies make a distinction between bodies and minds – or bodies and souls. And as I say, very often we go about life as though the two things were separate. We read and think and talk, and most of the time we do not really worry about what our body is doing. But it isn't quite as simple as that. As we have already noticed if something goes wrong with your body, then it's difficult for the mind to concentrate.

Often if we are ill or hurt, we don't find it easy to read or talk or think – or at least if we do think, we are thinking

about our ailment. As we come to the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday 22nd February, so we are reminded that we are made up of dust – we are

creatures with material bodies. The day before, we may well have over indulged those bodies with pancakes or the more flamboyant indulgences of *mardi gras* – now we try and exert some discipline over them. Not because they are bad or likely to lead us astray, but simply because they are part of us. Sometimes perhaps, when they go wrong, we wish they weren't, but God has created us with bodies and minds, and he loves all of us. For some people this winter, perhaps more than usual, those bodies will be cold or hungry. For some elsewhere in the world, those bodies will be cowering from, or injured in, violence and war. Christianity is not just about putting the minds right, it is also about putting the bodies right – because in fact you cannot do one without the other. We are about food banks, and warm spaces, and peace making, and peace keeping, just as much as we are about prayer. You cannot do one without the other, and that works both ways.

Yours



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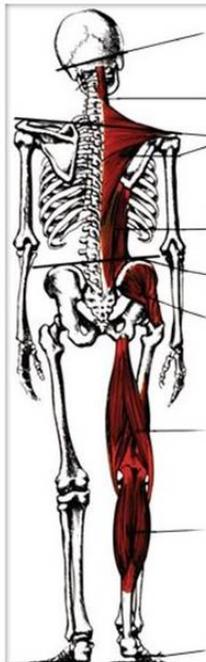
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Rt Revd Alan Winton Retires

Alan Winton on Consecration day with Archbishop Rowan Williams and the then Bishop of Norfolk, Graham James.



Alan Winton was Rector of Welwyn from 1999 until 2009. On 29th September 2009 he was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Thetford at St Paul's Cathedral by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and moved to Norfolk with his wife Pippa and their two daughters.

After working for Shell, Alan completed a PhD in Biblical Studies at Sheffield University before moving to Strasbourg

to work with the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society. Following his ordination in 1991 he served his Curacy at Christ Church Southgate before becoming Priest-in-Charge at St Paul's Walden, during which time he simultaneously held a post within the Diocese of St Albans as Continuing Ministerial Education Officer.

continued on p13



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Rt Revd Alan Winton Retires *continued from p11*

St Paul's Walden Bury was the childhood home of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Alan had stories to tell of his encounters with her during her visits!

He came to Welwyn as Rector in 1999 during which time he presided over the formation of the Welwyn Team Ministry, adding two further churches to the three he already had responsibility for. Alan was also instrumental in the fund-raising for and building of Church House attached to St Mary's Church. This facility was many years in the making following a number of alterations to the plans. It opened in February 2007 making a significant difference to the church and wider community in Welwyn.

After nearly 14 years, Bishop Alan announced his intention to retire in April 2023. He said:

"I am very aware of how blest I've been to serve as one of the bishops in such a lovely part of the country. Visiting the churches of the diocese week by week, worshipping in such beautiful buildings, meeting such caring and committed people has been a joy.

I'm also grateful for the chance I've enjoyed to play a small part in encouraging the fabulous and crucial work that goes on in our schools.

It has been deeply moving to witness the commitment and generosity of so many people whose faith leads them to serve their communities, particularly where poverty, homelessness and other marks of our tragically unequal society are present.

I've often said that the task of ministry can be summarised as learning to love the people God has given you to serve. I feel very thankful that God placed me in

a diocese where that has been such a happy task.

As Pippa and I move away from the diocese next year, we will do so with much to give thanks for to God. The people of Norfolk and Waveney will remain in our hearts and our prayers with thanksgiving for all we've shared."

The Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher added:

"Alan Winton's ministry as Bishop of Thetford has been marked by grace and pastoral care. He has made a significant contribution to many areas of diocesan life, including the selection and training of clergy, our church schools, and parishes in his care.

Like many others, I am grateful for his friendship and the way in which he welcomed me to the diocese. His wife, Pippa, has been a gentle and prayerful presence amongst us with an ability to come alongside people, especially partners of the clergy" .

All of us who knew Alan in Welwyn will wish them both well in their retirement.





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Saturday Concert

The second season of Saturday Recitals in St Mary's is now in full swing and being well supported by a loyal following as word gets around about the high standard of music available in Welwyn village.

Whilst the concerts are free to attend, there is a retiring collection for Church Funds. Thanks to increasing audience numbers, modest fees can now be offered to performers, and these are much appreciated by those young people who are still studying at the Royal Academy and similar world-class institutions.

The next Recital:

Cambridge Chamber Ensemble

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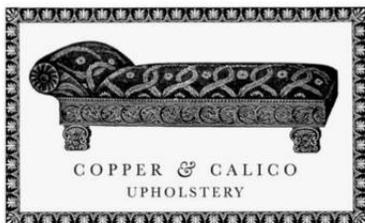
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20 mph Limits

One of the perhaps unexpected developments of the pandemic in Welwyn, as an aid to social distancing, was the introduction of planters at the roadside in the village centre sporting 20mph signs. Introduced to make more space for pedestrians to pass one another safely, thereby narrowing the roadway with mini-chicanes which slow down traffic. The 20mph temporary restrictions remain in place though the need for social distancing has lapsed. Whilst it seems obvious that the 20mph restrictions in Welwyn centre should lead to fewer accidents and injuries, we thought we should look at what has happened where more extensive 20mph restrictions have been introduced.

Edinburgh introduced 20mph speed limits on many streets between 2016-2018. Researchers at Edinburgh University found that in one year, collisions fell by 40%, casualties by 39% and fatalities by 23%. However, another scheme in Belfast city centre streets led to a drop in casualties and collisions of just 2%.

More comparable to Welwyn is the village of Wheathampstead, which introduced extensive traffic calming measures and a 20mph limit several years ago. Although no data is available on the number of accidents, both Welwyn and Wheathampstead provide a more pleasant environment for

pedestrians since the restrictions were introduced.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents suggests that pedestrians are 40% less likely to die when hit by a car travelling at 20mph compared with 30mph. We have heard it said that 20mph limits are not enforceable, which is wrong. But it may be less likely that resources will be allocated to enforcement of such a low limit.

At the time of writing, the consensus amongst our parish councillors is in favour of the Welwyn 20mph restrictions continuing, though not every one of them is of this view. If you have an opinion, one way or another, you may wish to let your councillor(s) know. You can find their contact details posted on the noticeboard outside the parish office in Lockleys Drive, or online at www.welwyn-pc.gov.uk

If you are already predisposed to maintaining and even extending the current zone where 20mph restrictions apply, you might like to lend your support to the '20's Plenty for Hertfordshire' campaign:

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Welwyn Natural History Society

Welcome to our first communication of 2023. Yes, we agree – time flies! We had our AGM in January (more about that next month) and are looking forward to seeing you this month when we have our yearly joint lecture with the Hertfordshire Natural History Society.

A different one this time as we will all be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the founding of Heartwood Forest in Sandridge, northwest of St Albans. To remind you, this extract is from their site on the web:

“A vast new forest of more than half a million trees, pockets of ancient woodland, wildflower meadows and fantastic wildlife spotting. It’s no surprise that the Woodland Trust’s Heartwood Forest is one of our most popular destinations.”

“What’s more, Heartwood Forest promises to be even bigger and better in the future. Visit us today and you can go wild in the great outdoors, enjoy some fantastic walks and really get back to nature. Come back again and you’ll be rewarded with the unique chance to watch this new natural world grow all around you.”

This type of enterprise seems to me to be much more valuable than the haphazard planting of trees across Hertfordshire, so I will be most interested to hear what our speaker has to say... and I think it will be Tim Hill – who better?

Hoping to see you on 22nd February, at 8pm in the Welwyn Civic Centre. Visitors £4; children FREE.

Judith Watson



Bible Discovery's gifts to Ukraine

For Christmas 2022 we all wanted to do something for charity again, and ALPHS, run by Tina Banks, was chosen. We both know Tina very well and had seen how what is given actually reaches its destination quickly, see these photographs to prove it. Tina suggested filling shoe boxes with gifts for a community centre she supports in Ukraine. Bombed out of their homes, the women and children live together, many bereaved of their husbands.

So many of you responded to the plea for gifts to go into the boxes! A heartfelt thank you to you all, and not forgetting our charity shop in Welwyn who found heaps of woolly hats and gloves for us. Our home was

full to the brim with DIY shoe boxes being assembled and filled with heaps of wonderful toys, chocolate, books, felt tip pens, drawing books, gloves and scarves, jewellery, toiletries, food in tins and packets.....! Our hall looked like an overcrowded market place!

We placed a Christmas card in each box with a message in English translated into Ukrainian by our dear Ukrainian guest, Nadia, working her socks off at our kitchen table. The boxes were then wrapped in Christmas paper, all 64 of them! There were also 10 boxes filled with items too large to go in the shoe boxes: clothing, candles, torches, water purifying tablets, lots more food, toys, games and puzzles for children and a large bag of baby



continued on p21

Bible Discovery's gifts to Ukraine *continued from p20*

clothes. There was a wonderful atmosphere of happiness and laughter while people worked away.

The very next day, Tina arrived with her ALPHS van and we loaded it up. A few days later we received a photo of it all being loaded into the lorry bound for Ukraine, the courageous Ukrainian team awaiting its arrival to deliver all the contents.



At Christmas we received a wonderful video of the team wishing us all a 'Happy Christmas' and grateful thanks for what we had given. Then we received another video of children opening the boxes, smiles all over their faces.

Meanwhile, Tina loads another lorry to take the requested much needed supplies off to Ukraine. She also "does a shout" for the rest of the money needed to buy the ambulance for the hospital she supports, kick started by the amazing sum of money raised by the churches' Christmas pantomime.

Our prayers this year are for peace for these courageous people of Ukraine, many living without electricity and water supplies. Even the shops are being bombed Nadia tells us as she speaks to her friends under siege in Ukraine. Their endurance and bravery are very inspiring and we must not let our support for them waver.

Mike and Gay Carpenter

Support your local market!

*12th February and 12th March
10.00 am – 1.30 pm
Civic Centre, Welwyn*



Nothing ever happens in February!

February is often perceived as a boring month, when nothing ever happens, so I thought I would have a little look back in history to find out if there have been any notable events. It turns out that there have been quite a few.

For example, in 1301 (the earliest date I found) the son of King Edward I of England became the first ever Prince of Wales on 7th February and on 10th February 1355 the students of Oxford University fought a pitched battle over the course of two or three days with local townspeople resulting in around 90 deaths and many injuries. A few centuries later, the students, obviously sated with fighting as a result of the earlier battle, declared on 14th February 1933 that they would not fight "For King and Country". (The former fighting resulted from a student's complaint about the inferior quality of the wine he had been served!)

February has not always been a good month for royalty. 2nd February 1902 was Queen Victoria's state funeral and, of course, King George VI died on 6th February 1952. On 12th February 1554 Lady Jane Grey, the "nine days queen", was beheaded in the Tower of London, aged only 16, and in 1587 on 8th February Mary Queen of Scots suffered the same fate but at Fotheringhay Castle.

In 1797 over 1,000 French troops attempted to invade Britain by landing on the Welsh coast near Fishguard on 22nd February. The stalwart ladies of that region send them packing! However, on

26th February the Bank of England issued the first ever pound note partly in response to the panic which arose in the country as a result of the attempted invasion. Continuing on the theme of money, on 16th February 1659, a cheque was used for the first time in Britain as Mr Nicholas Vanacker settled a debt and in 1971 Britain went decimal on 15th February and half crowns, bobs, tanners, threepenny bits and enormous pennies disappeared from our lives for ever.

Several innovations occurred in February, too. In 1804 (21st February) Mr Richard Trevithick, an engineer, demonstrated the first steam engine to run on rails and, somewhat later, in 1958 parking metres were introduced to the streets of Mayfair on 5th February. In 1927 Malcolm Campbell set a new land speed record on 4th February, at Pendine Sands in Wales covering the Flying Kilometre (in an average of two runs) at 174.883 mph (281.447 km/h) and the Flying Mile in 174.224 mph (280.386 km/h), in the Napier-Campbell Bluebird.

Of course, there have been many more notable events than these few I have cited, including the second battle of St Albans, and New Amsterdam being re-named New York, but these are the ones I found interesting. I hope you do too.

R. McNeill

Friends of Danesbury and QVM

Love is in the air, everywhere I look around, Love is in the air, every sight and every sound!

February is the month of love... and our shop in Welwyn High Street has been preparing to be part of the annual Valentine's day celebration. No doubt our window display will be worth a look. Our shop also has lots of affordable items which during these hard times could offer you that gift for someone special without breaking the bank.

Throughout February we will be carrying out refurbishments within the shop, to modernise it and make items more accessible. Please do look out for signs on our shop window and website for updates on which days we will be having to closing the shop.

Some of our supporters may also have noticed that the flat above our shop has gone up for sale. Please can I reassure you that this will have no impact on our shop below and we will be open to the public for many more years to come.

As a special treat before Christmas, the *Welwyn Wailers* reunited one more time to sing carols at both Danesbury and QVM. This proved to be a huge success and was enjoyed by all who attended. We would like to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to all those who organised and took part in this event.

At Danesbury and QVM the calm after the Christmas celebrations has not lasted long as the gym refurbishment continues. The physio and occupational therapists have again been displaced while the refurbishment takes place, with patients carrying out their physiotherapy in make do accommodation. However, this has not stopped patient progress and we are happy to report that the '*Friends*' have been able to support the refurbishment of the gym with the purchase of new equipment. At QVM the refurbishment of the hospital has finally come to an end, with only the odd finishing touches due to take place.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported our shop this year, both by donating amazing clothes and other items for resale and by purchasing items in the shop throughout the year. The shop is a treasure trove of things to buy, it is the main source of our income and funds everything we do to support the patients at Danesbury and the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital. A special thank you as well to everyone who supported our Christmas raffle, we raised an amazing £1,180. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

We have also had a great response in regards to needing volunteers at Danesbury and QVM. For those that have offered their time, thank you. Wishing you a wonderful February,

Friends of Danesbury & QVM

The Sad Demise of Reuben Nobbs

Welwyn can rarely be considered a hotbed of crime, least of all violent crime. Indeed, reading the Petty Court reports of years gone by the little crime which occurred seemed to have been limited to cases of drunkenness, poaching and the theft of turnips from fields.

This makes the events of June 1868 even more surprising. The participants in this sad tale were James Blow, William Orchard and Reuben Nobbs. After the events of 6th June 1868 only two would still be alive to see the next day.

James Blow was a strong, well-built 49 year old who worked as a Superintendent of Works on the Danesbury estate. He lived in Mill Lane with his wife Mary and son Thomas Bates Blow, who later would found the renowned Bee Hive factory.

Around 9 pm on the night in question, James was leaving the Baron of Beef pub when he passed in the doorway William Orchard, a groom from Tewin Water. Allegedly, in passing in the doorway, James pushed against Orchard rather firmly, to which Orchard took offence. Orchard followed James into the street demanding to know *“what he meant by pushing him”*.

As so often can happen, particularly after the consumption of a couple of ales, things got out of hand. When James refused to talk to him, William once again demanded to know what Blow meant by pushing him. As James reached his front door, just twenty yards away, he had

clearly decided to end the conversation and knocked Orchard to the ground before going into his house and locking the door. Orchard did not take kindly to this and after recovering, hammered and kicked at the front door for some time before returning to the pub to find out who his assailant had been. Soon he returned, with his coat stripped off, ready for a fight.

This could have ended as just another Saturday night ale-induced brawl but now fate took an unkind turn. Whilst Orchard was away preparing for a fight, Blow's friend Reuben Nobbs had been observing events from his sweetheart's house across the street. Twenty eight year old Nobbs was a close friend of James Blow and worked under him at Danesbury. In fact it was claimed that Blow treated him as a son.

Reuben crossed to Blow's house and fastened the gate, presumably to deny Orchard entry. However on Orchard's return he simply jumped over the fence and proceeded once again to hammer violently on Blow's door. Reuben was stooping in the garden when Blow came out of his house armed with a poker. Orchard was in the garden when James Blow passed him and struck out at a person he assumed was an accomplice. Unfortunately in the poor light he struck not Orchard nor any accomplice, but his friend Reuben Nobbs. The injured Nobbs was taken into Blow's house and the surgeon Mr Morris called. He found two

The Sad Demise of Reuben Nobbs *continued from p24*

small wounds to his head and ordered him to be sent home and kept quiet. He was at this point conscious, and engaged Blow in conversation, but during the night he lost consciousness and died at 9 o'clock the next morning.

The post mortem revealed a severe fracture to the skull with much blood loss. The body of unfortunate Reuben was moved to the White Hart where the inquest was held before coroner Mr Charles Hart, with a jury of 15. Reports state *'the room was crowded by the inhabitants of the village and neighbourhood, where the occurrence had caused general excitement and regret'*. After considering the case the coroner ruled that Blow should appear before the magistrates to be charged

with manslaughter. He was brought before the magistrate Dr Adby on Monday and committed for trial with bail set to £200 for himself and two sureties of £100 each supplied by his brother Henry, and William Blake of Danesbury. The trial was heard in Hertford in July and much of the same evidence was given. James pleaded guilty to manslaughter and expressed deep sorrow and regret at the events of that night. After much legal argument the jury found him guilty but with a strong recommendation for mercy. James was released on his two bail sureties to keep the peace for twelve months, so clearly mercy was shown but in an era of capital punishment, how lucky was he?

Paul Jiggins



Stories in Glass at Ayot St Peter



The beautiful stained-glass memorial windows in our church are always much admired by visitors. Most are dedicated to people who died after 1875,

when the church was completed, and all those remembered are buried in the old churchyard, where the previous village church stood.

The impressive west window was donated by George Robinson of Ayot Bury in memory of his wife Jane Ann, who died in 1879. George Robinson was the son of a felt maker from Staffordshire. He joined Coutts Bank and was only the second person who started as a clerk to be promoted to partner. Of all the people remembered in the windows, Jane Ann Robinson is the only one known to have lived in the village. Her window is very striking and bright, even on the dullest day.

The next window is a small memorial dedicated to the *“infant children of W.F. and M.C. Thompson”*. These were two baby daughters of William Frederic and Marie Charlotte Thompson. This London couple were probably friendly with Henry Jephson, the Ayot Rector, from his time as curate of Evesham, where Marie lived before her marriage. Edith Thompson, their surviving daughter, was a high-achiever with

interests in education, welfare and sport, who was awarded a CBE for her work.

The next three windows on the south side are all dedicated to the family of William Henry Wills, who was Charles Dickens’ editor, and also his friend. The Wills family lived at the house called Sherrards on Rectory Road, which was in Welwyn parish at that time, but is closer to Ayot St Peter church than Welwyn St Mary’s.

The only memorial window on the north side of the church remembers Annie Catherine Boulton who died in 1894. The window was provided by her husband Dr Percy Boulton and her son by her first marriage, Captain Vickerman of “the Buffs” (the East Kent regiment). The Bouldons were London residents, but both Annie Catherine and Henry Jephson were from Nottinghamshire families, so that may have been the link to our church.

The stories of all the families represented in the windows can be found on our website:

www.ayotstpeter.com

Local singing group, the *Felici Company*, will perform a special Valentine’s Concert in the church on Saturday 18 February at 7.15pm. Tickets are £15 each from Zoe on 07712 530550.

Valerie Richards

Jubilee Trees at St Michael's

At a St Michael's church meeting in March 2022 it was decided that the best way to celebrate the amazing service given to our county by Queen Elizabeth was to plant a tree in the new church yard. Those in the know decided that the best time to plant a tree was in Autumn, and so it was not until September 2022 that we began to consider where best to buy a tree.

It was at this time that Hertfordshire launched it's *'Your Tree Our future'* scheme, and anyone willing to plant a tree, or trees, on their land would be given a tree of their choice. This, to a Church with limited financial resources, seemed a gift from God; an opportunity too good to miss. From the extensive list provided by the council we chose two trees, a Rowan and a Crab Apple, and placed our order. Several months later, when we had forgotten all about the tree planting scheme, we received instructions

from the council, telling us where and when we could collect our trees. Alan Gowans kindly agree to take his spacious car to pick them up. The collection point was in a WGC car park. It was all beautifully organised and Alan was quickly provided with our ordered items. We were all somewhat amused to find that the spacious car was superfluous, and a carrier bag was all that was necessary to transport our 'trees' which were in fact more like twigs than trees!

However, we duly planted them in their allotted places, just a week before the very cold spell. We followed the instructions kindly provided by the council and now await Spring to see if

the precious twigs have survived. Our thanks go to Hertfordshire council, for their generous *'Your Tree, Our future'* Scheme, to Nita and Alan for collecting the trees and to Christie, who helped me with the planting.

Susan Keach



PCC Meeting 21st November 2022

The Rector/Chairman opened the meeting in the customary manner and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

Finance: Unsurprisingly the discussion centred around the contract for the supply of electricity. This has been, and remains, under review to see whether any cheaper deals are available. Currently the electricity is on a flexible price contract. It is possible that the next bill might include a rebate in which case it might be advantageous to stay on an unfixed price contract rather than move to a fixed price contract.

Both St Mary's and St Michael's have been successful in their applications for grants (£250) from the Diocese to help with the cost of running the warm spaces.

Fabric : Stuart Jenkin circulated his report prior to the meeting. He had thoroughly investigated the challenge of Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and produced a detailed audit for St Mary's compared with the Church of England's document, "*A practical path to net zero carbon for our churches.*" It was agreed that all affordable steps are already in place at St Mary's. However the following may be considered:

- (1) Installing solar panels with battery storage if any re-roofing should be required to a roof

(Church House) having a sunny aspect.

- (2) Obtaining an Energy Performance Certificate for Church House.
- (3) Revisiting the Church of England Bronze Eco award.

All agreed to the replacing of the back door which is not weatherproof at St Michael's House.

The necessary improvement to the Mansafe roof system for St Mary's Church has been authorised.

Rector's Items: The Director of Music's proposal for choral scholarships at St Mary's had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was enthusiastically endorsed by the Rector and agreed to by all present. It is hoped that the costs will be offset by income from concerts and choral work. If you have not been to one of these concerts why not go along – you might be pleasantly surprised. They take place once a month at lunchtime on a Saturday.

It was also suggested that some income could be generated by asking for voluntary donations for livestreamed events. To be considered.

Mission Action Plan: The church calendar for 2023 has been prepared and particular mention was made of the rota evening scheduled for 7th March. Please consider attending with a view to volunteering for one of the

PCC Meeting 21st November 2022 *continued from p28*

worthy roles at St Mary's as the Rector cannot do them all by himself!

The Parish Giving Scheme: is proving popular and beneficial as a regular giving scheme as it allows for inflationary increases.

Fayres / fetes: were suggested as effective fund raising events but the concern was noted that if St Mary's was to organise its own fete, that would detract from or be diminished by the Welwyn Festival.

There was a report from the last Deanery Synod meeting. Amongst other matters they had widened the opportunities for folk to get involved in the *Bike and Hike* event that is so profitable.

All members of the PCC must

undertake online safeguarding training to CO level and inform the Rector to keep the record up to date. Similarly DBS checks should be up to date and expiry dates notified to the Rector for the record.

At present there is no permanent organist at St Mary's. The ad hoc arrangement continues.

Can you play the organ?

If so St Mary's would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact the Rector via e-mail:

rector@welwyn.org.uk

David Hughes



*The Christmas appeal for funds towards building an Art Studio for **Gombards Care Home** in Welwyn Village raised £2,533; grateful thanks to everyone who contributed.*

Gombards has created a not-for-profit business selling cards and gifts made with custom artwork by the people they support.

They can often be found selling these items at the Community Café in St Mary's Church House 10.00/12 noon on Tuesday mornings.

News from Woolmer Green Parish Council

Christmas Charity - fund raising

The Parish Council asked Market Manager, Tracie Harris, to nominate the charity for Christmas 2022 fund raising and she chose the *Hertfordshire Charity for Deprived Children*.

The Woolmer Green Band started the fund raising in November at the County Funerals' Christmas Wreath event in Little Wymondley, then went on to the Woolmer Green November Farmers' Market, The Red Lion Christmas Extravaganza and the lights switch-on events in Datchworth and Burnham Green. The Woolmer Green Band raised £260.08 and is very grateful to the businesses and individuals who generously donated at the events.



The final event (pictured) was the popular Woolmer Green Christmas Eve carols around the tree when a further £179.06 was collected from the kind people of Woolmer Green.

A total of £439.14 will be given to the charity. Thank you to everyone who donated, and all those who organised and participated in the events.

Parish Council - update

The Parish Council is reviewing its finances and plans closely as it sets the budget for 2023/24. At the December meeting it was agreed to have a thorough review of the heating system to see where improvements could be made. Next date of the Farmers' Market is 26th February 2023. Please come and support your local traders.

Sarah Hall

Woolmer Green Parish Council

sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk



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Mardley Heath WI

November 2022

"If music be the food of love"

This month brought beauty, peace and tranquillity

In these times when there seems so much futility

Ursula Grainger brought her harp to entertain us all

We agreed without question that we had a ball!

We didn't dance, we had no singer
But we certainly wanted the music to linger

Ursula read us passages within a world where we felt secure

To think of others and the atrocities they had to endure

The music then with our eyes closed tight

Helped us to empathise with their human plight

Did she leave us in this sad place?

Not at all, we went upbeat which put a smile on my face

The harp is an instrument we don't hear often these days

But when played well, so many sensations it can raise

It holds itself regally and is a joy to hear
With notes which float harmoniously to your ear

It makes you think of a bygone age
When a harp would, and did, hold centre stage

Mardley Heath ladies had such a treat
"Thank you Ursula" that evening will be

hard to beat

"if music be the food of love, play on"

the bard said

I think our ladies would agree and take that as read!



Ursula Grainger

December 2022

We gave the miserable old year a hearty push into the past when we met for our Christmas party in December. Food, wine and fun cheered us up, and we looked ahead with hope for better times in 2023.

President Jean Stephens along with her Committee, had prepared the long table in advance. Decorations included

continued on p34

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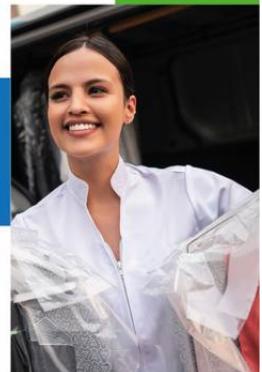
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Mardley Heath WI *continued from p32*

lovely flower arrangements by Betty Wiffen. Three lucky members who had December birthdays were each allowed to take home one of the floral arrangements. Everyone received a mystery present too. We laughed through a light-hearted quiz, and gave some preliminary thought to the WI's next National Resolutions.

Mardley Heath WI has been a centre of friendship in the Oaklands area of Welwyn for 66 years. Some members who have moved away still come to meetings from Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City. Two of the present 27 members joined in the first few months of its 1956 founding. It started with 75 members (and a waiting list) and it would be great to see some new faces at our venue, Oaklands School.

The 2023 programme has been prepared. The first meeting held on Thursday 19th January at 7.30pm was

when Sarah Harrison spoke to us: ***'You couldn't make it up - a humorous look at life'***.

Most meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at Oaklands Primary School, Great North Road, Welwyn. If you would like to try us out, please just come along or call our Secretary, Brenda Thomas on 01438 716571 .

For any additional information, please contact our Secretary by e-mail at:

secretary.mhwi@gmail.com

New members and visitors are always welcome.

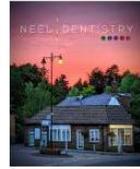
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2.6 million **Reading Well** books have been borrowed from libraries, and 91% of people surveyed, found the books helpful.

There are five book lists available:

- Reading Well for children
- Reading Well for teens
- Reading Well for mental health
- Reading Well for long term conditions
- Reading Well for dementia

Many of the **Reading Well** titles are also available to borrow as *e-books* and *audio books*. Visit your local library website to find out how to join the library and access books electronically.

The library is free to join for anyone who lives or works in Hertfordshire. All you need is ID showing your address and one of the library volunteers will be delighted to sign you up.

You can find the Welwyn Community Library at the Civic Centre. Current opening hours are:

- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday - 2pm-5pm
- Saturday - 10am-1pm

To find out more about the **Reading Well** scheme visit your local library or visit: www.reading-well.org.uk.

If you would like further information about the Bridge Cottage Surgery

Patient Participation Group

please email:

ppgbridgecottage@gmail.com



Jessie the Rectory Dog

Rather belated new year resolutions:

- * To not get Master up in the middle of the night because I have a poorly tummy from too many apples.
- * Not to eat too many apples which make my tummy poorly.
- * To allow Master a little room on the sofa if he is good and not smelly.
- * Not to assume that (and act as) if I am supposed to be fed at seven o'clock, I will be dead by 7.02 if this does not happen.
- * Get out of the fairly new routine which

says I deserve a treat every bed time.

- * Not to roll in unmentionably horrible things.
- * Not to assume that any person coming up the drive is a major military assault to be repulsed with maximum force, only to jump in the person's arms if they do succeed in gaining entry.

Jess





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Welwyn Parish Council

I will start my article by wishing you all a happy, peaceful, healthy and safe 2023.



As I am writing this at the beginning of January, I cannot know what the next 12 months will bring, but I am hoping that the problems everyone is having at the moment with the cost of living, NHS etc. will start to improve, putting some normality back into our lives.

Thinking about the difficulties many people are experiencing in the present climate reminded me of the article in the latest edition of the *Welwyn Parish Community Newsletter*, which I hope you have read. This article is about the **Codicote Foodbank** which Welwyn Parish Council support, as it incorporates Welwyn Parish. It is run entirely by volunteers who are supporting 45 families by delivering food. If you would like to donate, the donation points in Welwyn Village are at *St Mary's Church* and *Belvoir Estate Agents*. Thank you.

In December Councillors for Welwyn Parish Council, appointed a new Deputy Clerk. Her name is Arooj Afzal. Arooj is very enthusiastic about the role and will be an excellent support for Caroline, our Clerk. Caroline has had the responsibility of both roles

since September so will be delighted to have Arooj working with her.

We are pleased to have filled the two councillor vacancies we had and from now until the election in May, Councillors will be working together on the objectives in our Action Plan.

Included in our many objectives is the continued provision of hire facilities in the Parish and we will monitor the use of the Civic Centre, Whitehill Centre, the Pavilion and the Parish Office.

We are keen to support local charities and organisations through the delivery of the Community Grant Scheme and will financially support services for Parish residents.

We are very pleased with the progress of the Whitehill Wildflower Meadow and will be developing sustainable management plans to encourage wildlife and wildflowers on all Parish Council owned land. We are also considering planting trees, where appropriate, on Parish Council owned land. These actions would be in line with our Climate Emergency Action Plan which aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the Parish community by incorporating sustainable practices.

We have decided to install a public access defibrillator at the front entrance of the Civic Centre. We have a footfall at the Civic Centre which

continued on p40

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Welwyn Parish Council *continued from p38*

includes not just members of the public attending meetings, concerts, the Farmers' Market etc. but also activity group hirers ,for example badminton, dance and keep fit. It seemed to us that installing a defibrillator would not only be sensible but essential for such a busy area of the village.

We, as a Parish Council, try hard to keep our Parish a good place to live and work and we always welcome

comments and ideas for the Council to consider.

If you wish to contact the Council, our office on Lockleys Drive is:

Open: **9am to 3pm, Monday-Friday**

Telephone: **0148716667**

Email: **office@welwynpc.org.uk**

Please look after yourselves and each other.

Marj Otty

Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

Oaklands Post Office update

Recently there have been some changes at the Post Office in Oaklands. Jay and Sangita are no longer managing the Post Office and shop.

I spoke to Jay on the day that they left, and he told me that they have not yet decided what to do next. They will continue to live in the Oaklands area but from now on they will be on the other side of the counter.

Jay and Sangita have been great supporters of the *The Welwyn Magazine with Woolmer Green* and selling between forty and fifty copies every month, more than any other retail premises in the area. We thank them for their support with the distribution of the magazine, and wish them well in whatever they decide to do next.

The new people at Oaklands Post

Office are Philip and Mary from North London, and they have taken over the business. Previously, Philip and Mary worked in the finance and scientific civil service sectors. They are planning to introduce a new range of goods and make improvements to the shop. They very much look forward to meeting every body.

You will be pleased to know that you will still be able to buy your Welwyn Parish Magazine in the Oaklands Post Office.

Philip and Mary say '*Please do pop in and say 'hello'*'. You can also contact them with any queries on:

oaklandspo@yahoo.com

We wish Philip and Mary well in their new venture.

Tony Keach

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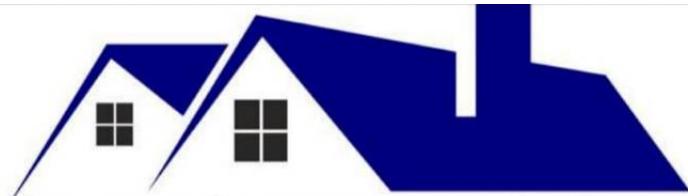
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New lives at the zoo

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), of which Whipsnade is a part is a charity devoted to the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. It was founded in 1826 and since 1828 has maintained London Zoo. Whipsnade opened in 1931.

One of the ways in which ZSL works towards conservation of animals is participation in very carefully regulated captive breeding programmes. These programmes have led to the successful reintroduction of Scimitar Horned Oryx into areas of Africa, and Przewalski's Horses into selected areas of Mongolia.

In my work as a volunteer at the Zoo I have been privileged to see some of the new babies born at Whipsnade in 2022.



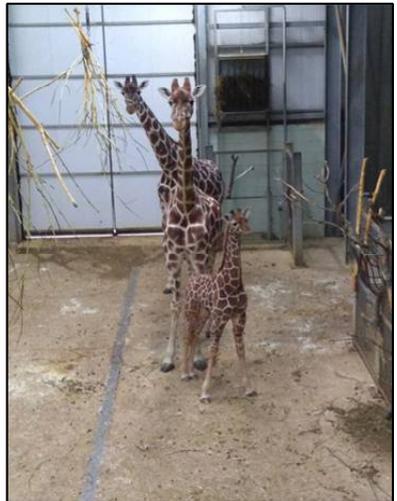
On 22nd August, Nang Phaya, a baby female Asian Elephant was born. I have already written about her in this magazine, but because you can never have too many photos of a baby elephant, above is another one!

In October, Carol and Ernie our Asian Small Clawed Otters became parents for the first time. The pups, a male and a female, have been given the official birthday of 24th October and have been named Peanut (m) and Pistachio (f). They stayed in the nesting box until



they were about two months old, but started venturing out occasionally after Christmas and can now often be seen playing on the island, especially when Carol and Ernie are not there to drag them back to the nest. Otters eat 50% of their own bodyweight every day, so when the adults go off to find food, the babies sneak out to play. Peanut and Pistachio are absolutely adorable and will help to boost the numbers of Asian otters which are listed as "Vulnerable" as a result of habitat loss, pollution, and in some areas sadly, hunting.

Just a couple of weeks later, on 11th Nov Luna one of our reticulated giraffes gave birth to



a male calf. Because he was born on Remembrance Day

continued on p44

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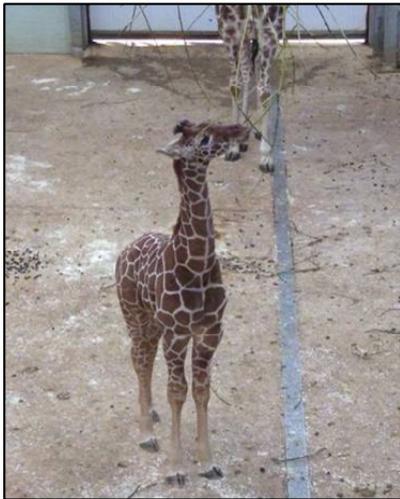
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New lives at the zoo *continued from p42*

he was given the name Wilfred in honour of the war poet Wilfred Owen. Wilfred was about six feet tall when he was born and, to start with was kept in the inner giraffe house with his mother. He was slowly introduced to the rest of the herd and can now be seen with 'aunties' (not related!) Nuru and Ijuma as well as dad, Bashu and mum, Luna. Wilfred is learning to run – a very important skill for a baby giraffe – and his long legs flail about looking very uncoordinated as he runs about the giraffe house and the paddocks. Reticulated Giraffes are listed as "Endangered" because of habitat loss, deterioration in habitat quality and poaching.



The last Whipsnade baby I am going to mention today is one with which you may not be familiar. We have some Visayan Warty Pigs at the zoo, Manny (m) and Pixie (f). They are listed as 'Critically Endangered' in the wild due to habitat loss and hunting. They are endemic to six of the Visayan islands in the central Philippines, however it is believed that they are already

extinct on four of those islands and there are only small populations remaining on the other two. It is estimated that there are only about 200 animals left in the wild. Several zoos are participating in captive breeding programmes in the hope of pulling this highly endangered animal back from the brink of extinction. While the zoos work to breed sufficient genetically diverse warty pigs, conservationists work in the islands to help the local populations develop strategies to improve and preserve habitats and find alternatives to hunting such vulnerable species. ZSL was therefore delighted when Pixie gave birth in 2022. She had one piglet – I do not know if it is a male or female yet – which is now beginning to venture out into the enclosure. As you can see from the photograph, it is a seriously cute baby and the hair on the top of its head will grow into a quiff which will flop over its ears, as it matures. Adult males have such a great quiff it can be regarded as a mane.

Do visit Whipsnade if you can. There is so much to see there and every ticket sold helps towards vital conservation work all round the world.

R. McNeill



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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
Saturday	9.00 am	Parish Prayers

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ST MICHAEL'S - Woolmer Green www.stmichaels-wg.org.uk

Sunday	11.15 am
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2nd Sunday	Family Service
3rd Sunday	All Age Eucharist
5th Sunday	Morning Prayer

AYOT ST PETER www.ayotstpeter.com

1st Sunday	11.15 am	Matins: (<i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i>)
2nd and 5th Sundays	11.15 am	Holy Communion: (<i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i>)
3rd Sunday	11.15 am	Family Service: (<i>Common Worship, NRSV Bible</i>)
4th Sunday	11.15 am	Parish Communion: (<i>Common Worship, NRSV Bible</i>)

EVANGELICAL CHURCH - Welwyn www.welwyn-evangelical.org.uk

Sunday	9.45 am	Bible Classes (All ages 7+)
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Wednesday	8.00 pm	Bible Study (except 3rd Wednesday)

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Those of you who are as old as me will remember the “love is” cartoons by New Zealand cartoonist, Kim Casali. February is the month of love. Valentine’s day reminds us all to take a moment to appreciate those we love. But what is love and how can we show it? One of the best know narratives on the truest value of love is found in the book of *1 Corinthians ch 13*.

“Love is patient, love is kind.

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