

The Welwyn Magazine

with Woolmer Green



March 2023

60p

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March 2023

PUBLISHERS

St Mary's and St Michael's
Churchwardens

COVER

Singler's Marsh
by Ian Blair

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

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Include your contact details.
email: magazine@welwyn.org.uk

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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:

magazine@welwyn.org.uk

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The Rector's Letter

Dear Friends

This year in Lent we are looking at the Psalms in the bible, in a Lent course written by our curate and old testament scholar, Christie Gilfeather. The psalms are the hymn book of the bible, being the songs mostly attributed to King David, which the Jews sang and indeed sing in their worship today. This is one tradition which was taken over wholesale by Christians. We still sing the psalms in a variety of ways, and they form the backbone of much of our worship.



Most Christian traditions now supplement this collection with songs and hymns from Christian history or indeed more contemporary Christian worship songs, though some stricter biblical traditions stick to the biblical psalms.

In the past hundred years many churches have reemphasized the Eucharist (Mass, Holy Communion, call it what you will) as central to the church's worship. This is quite right, but one downside of it, is that congregations are less exposed to the psalms which are found more in other services: morning and evening prayer for instance. They also serve as the mainstay of worship in monastic communities, with some orders singing the whole 150 psalms every day of their lives – they don't do much else!

But why are the psalms not only important, but perennially popular throughout history? Firstly I think, they give a snap shot of an intriguing way of life of the Israelite nation which is now lost to history – particularly the so called Temple psalms with their description of festivals at the Jerusalem Temple.

Secondly though, is the fact that the psalms are not 'dry' banal worship lyrics (as in Monty Python 'O Lord, you are really quite terrific..') but go through the whole gamut of human emotions, including those perhaps we might not think suitable for church. There are songs of lament, despair, anger and frustration, as well as thanksgiving and praise. They tackle the big issues of humanity square on: suffering, injustice, death, violence, war – these are all found in the psalms. As we sing or say them, we are confronted with our own humanity, our own limitations and our own frustrations – they are well worth a look.

David

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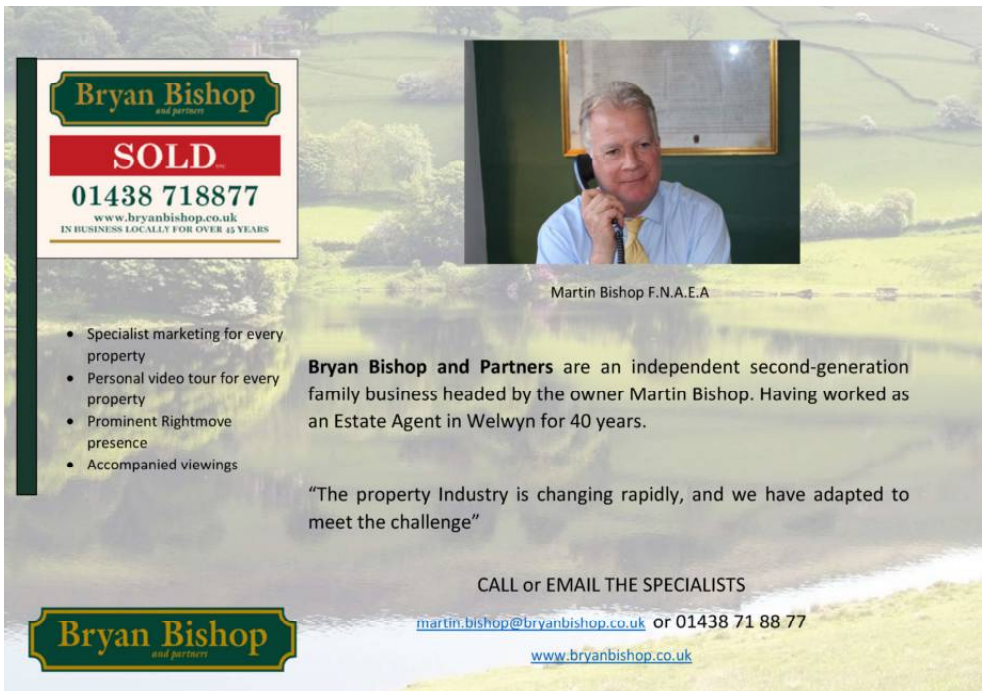
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JESSIE THE RECTORY DOG

What master hasn't quite cottoned onto is the fairly obvious conclusion that if I can write, then I can also read – maybe tricky in the days before kindle, because turning the pages in a conventional book without opposable thumbs has always been tricky.

So I thought I would have a bit of a read in that bible which master is always going on about. At the moment he keeps telling me, being Lent, that this is a period of abstinence and fasting (at least for humans, the bible and church have no word of the Lord for dogs on this – though comically in the book of Jonah, which is actually a much more funny book than people think, it's meant to be comic – all the animals have to join in the fast of Ninevah and dress in sackcloth and ashes). Therefore he goes around the house moaning and groaning, saying that he doesn't have enough energy to take me out for a walk, or to play ball with me, and perhaps I might think about indulging a little less too (yea, yea, yea, whatever ...)



So master, my reply to you is Matthew 6:16-18: “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Apocryphal sources add ‘so buck up, sad face, and take your dog out for a walk,’

Jess

Parish Registers

St Mary's Welwyn

Funerals

18th January

David Williams (Bill) Bacon

23rd January

Elsie Brown Evans

Baptism

22nd January

Theodore Christagis Stavrou



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SINGLER'S MARSH UPDATE

The Singler's Marsh Action Group (SMAG), together with Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group (WPAG), residents and Welwyn Parish Council are fighting the objections to the Singler's Marsh Village Green application that was submitted by WPAG and others. Welwyn Parish Council fully supports the application for Village Green status and has previously awarded a grant towards the legal costs incurred so far. SMAG is grateful for its continued support.

Village Green status will confer greater protection in maintaining Singler's Marsh as an important Welwyn amenity, blocking the potential of a slice being carved off to create a new bridge, widened road and traffic lights onto Codicote roundabout. If a developer were to be awarded permission to build a substantial number of houses on the land surrounding Welwyn Cemetery, the roads and access onto Codicote Road would have to be improved significantly.

Singler's Marsh is part-owned by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on behalf of the local community. Two objections to the Village Green application were received, one from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the other from a potential developer. Welwyn West Borough Councillors have sought to keep the proposed development off the 'Local Plan' so it is unclear why most of them do not support the Village Green application. The Council has been asked repeatedly but refuses to say why it is objecting.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for running the application process. It has set-up a Public Inquiry with its own choice of Inspector and preliminary hearings have already taken place. It is likely that between them HCC and WHBC will spend upwards of £200,000 on this Inquiry. It is known that the Borough Council has already spent nearly £7,000 on the King's Counsel (senior barrister) it has engaged to fight the application.

In 2021 over 1,000 local people completed a testimony questionnaire supporting the Village Green application. When the Public Inquiry was set-up a barrister skilled in open space applications was engaged on behalf of SMAG. He believes we have a strong case, and this is a fight worth pursuing on behalf of the community.

Based on technical aspects, Hertfordshire County Council has conceded that its current Inspector made a flawed decision earlier in the process. This has now been reversed but the process was held up whilst this was sorted out.

Continued on page 9

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SINGLER'S MARSH UPDATE (Continued)

Continued from page 7

It is not yet known whether Hertfordshire County Council will appoint a new Inspector.

Sadly, whilst the Councils can use tax-payer money to employ legal minds to fight the community, the community cannot. SMAG is organising a community fundraise to cover legal costs in defending the application. Several people have already come forward with donations and pledges of money, but, if we are to succeed, we still need to raise a considerable sum.

Unless the Borough Council withdraws its objection, the community is likely to need £40,000. Any amount is welcome but if you are able to dig deeper or run a local business wanting to support the community, please donate now via <https://justgiving.com/campaign/save-singlers-marsh> or by bank transfer to:

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Account No: **57676660**

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Reference: SMAG and your name

If you pay by bank transfer please email save@singlersmarsh.org.uk to let us know so we can ask you to complete a Gift-Aid form if relevant, and keep you abreast of developments.

Isn't this all a colossal waste of money? You would think so, particularly when there are potholes to be mended and funds towards education and social care resources are desperately needed, amongst many other things.

Singler's Marsh Action Group

'The editors acknowledge that this article expresses views which some may not share. If readers wish to put forward differing opinions the editors would be sympathetic towards publishing them.'

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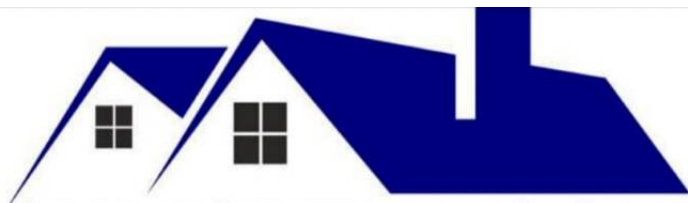
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FRIENDS OF DANESBURY AND THE QVM



No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. 20th March marks the first official day of Spring, and no doubt we will all welcome it with open arms as the days are longer, brighter and warmer!

If I can start with some amazing financial figures. The Danesbury charity shop in Welwyn achieved its highest annual sales figures since 2011!!! How brilliant is that? We cannot thank the Managers, Volunteers and all our customers enough for their continued support which has resulted in such a huge achievement. Your loyal custom and donations have made this possible. Our shop is our primary fund raiser, and this has allowed us to provide continued support to the Danesbury Hospital, Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Holywell and the Herts and Essex Hospital.

We would like to thank Videcom Security for donating several CCTV cameras to The Friends . With these cameras we have been able to update the security system in the shop. Videcom's generosity is much appreciated . Thanks also to our Manager, Georgia and her husband for enabling this donation.

At Danesbury and QVM the gardens are starting to come to life after a harsh winter. Hopefully it won't be long before the patients will be able to go out and do some gardening. At QVM we have purchased several new bird feeders which have been erected near to the windows of the wards, and we have supplied mixed bird food . The patients are enjoying watching the many birds that come to feed there on a daily basis. We are also hoping to provide the QVM

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FRIENDS OF DANESBURY AND THE QVM

Continued from page 13

Hospital with TVs for the wards and new gym now that the refurbishment is completed. A survey is to take place soon to assess the viability of this.

They have been running regular group tutorial and therapy sessions at Danesbury for Parkinson's patients who are living in our community. The tutorials are on-going and have been well received by everyone concerned. Thank you to everyone who responded to our appeal for volunteers to meet and greet the patients. The clinical staff are most grateful.

At Danesbury we have also agreed to help fund the refurbishment of the rehabilitation gym which is in constant use and makes so much difference to patients' rehab.

With Easter fast approaching our shop will be kitted out with all sorts of Easter goodies. Please do pop in to have a look as we always look forward to seeing our clientele.

Wishing you a wonderful March.

Friends of Danesbury & QVM

HONORARY CANON

We have received a letter from the Lord Bishop of St Albans with the following news.:

"I am writing to let you know that the Revd Dr David Muchin has accepted my invitation to be a Canon of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban. It has given me great pleasure to honour him in this way and I know that you will want to be among the first to offer him your congratulations. Great importance is put on the role of an Honorary Canonry, especially as a way of linking the Abbey with the Diocese and providing a channel for communication. I hope it will be possible for some of the parishioners to attend Evensong in the Cathedral on Saturday 18 March at 4.00pm for the ceremony of David's installation."

We are sure that all readers would like to congratulate David. We can re-assure everybody that he will continue to be the Rector of the Welwyn team.

Susan Keach, Diane Jenkin, Stuart Westley
Church Wardens



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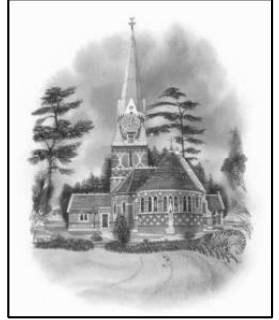
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NEWS FROM AYOT ST PETER

Just inside the church porch at Ayot St Peter is a large wooden plaque, set high up, which records an early donation to the church. The plaque goes unnoticed by most visitors and members of the congregation as they enter the church.

This intriguing piece of history records the fact that The Incorporated Society for Building and Churches granted £85 in 1874 “towards building this church, upon condition that all the seats be for the free use of the parishioners according to law”. The Bank of England calculator shows that £85 in 1874 would be worth almost £7,500 today.



So what was this society, our generous benefactor? It was originally set up in 1818 but was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1828 as The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building and Repairing of Churches and Chapels. The Society provided funds for building work at Anglican churches throughout England and Wales, and also had the stated purpose to “remedy the deficiencies of places set aside for Public Worship in our towns and cities”.

The Society was at the forefront of the battle for ‘free’ pews, in contrast to the then customary provision of private pews and the reliance on pew rents. Funding from the Society was responsible for adding over two million pew spaces, most of which were free. Between 1818 and 1982 it gave grants that helped to pay for the building and enlargement of many thousands of churches. The Society’s archive is held at Lambeth Palace Library and includes over 15,000 files relating to grant applications by parishes, including our own. The Society still exists today. After various name changes, it is now part of the National Churches Trust.

Back to the present time, the church authorities have recently installed a small kitchenette in the vestry at St Peter’s to improve the provision of refreshments. Sadly, we were not able to apply for a grant for this project, but we hope it will help us with fund-raising from social events in the future.

Don’t forget that March is the month when the wild daffodils in the disused Old Churchyard are at their best. They are worth a visit on a bright day – and take your camera! The Old Churchyard is at the approximate postcode of AL6 9BQ.

Valerie Richards

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There are Food Tables at both St Mary's Church Welwyn and St Michael's Church Woolmer Green where anyone who can afford to leave donations to the Churches' Open Food Tables and the Codicote Food Bank can put their items of non-perishable food .

Anyone who is in need can help themselves to any of the items on the Food Tables, whenever the Churches are open. Anyone who is struggling to buy food is welcome to take as much as they need, whenever they need it. On a weekly basis any surplus donations go to the Codicote Food Bank .

Church House will also be open every day from

9.00am until 2.00pm as a safe, warm space, where people can get hot drinks, stay warm and stay as long as they want – there is even free wi-fi available!

St Michael's Church is never very warm but every Monday afternoon (1.00pm-3.00pm) members of St Michael's church will be hosting a new community space in the village hall (Hall Lane, Woolmer Green SG3 6XA). There will be hot drinks and space to meet other people, as well as a quiet space for those who wish to work from home.

Tony Keach

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WOOD BURNING STOVES AND OUR HEALTH

What's nicer on a cold winter's evening than sitting beside the cosy glow from a wood-burning stove? In the days before central heating became common, one of your authors grew up coming downstairs from a cold bedroom to don their underwear that had been left overnight to warm in front of a Rayburn.

Usually, you'll find us writing in this magazine about crime and crime prevention, topics that involve police action. But occasionally we note other activities that cause harm where the remedies involve civil penalties. Emissions from polluting wood-burning stoves are one such instance. You would think that emissions from vehicles would be more serious than from wood-burning stoves. But wood burning in homes produces more small particle pollution (17%) than all road traffic in the UK (13%), according to government data revised in 2022. A recent report by Professor Chris Whitty, familiar to us from his regular TV appearances during the pandemic, stated that even the most "eco-design" stoves release 450 times more air pollution than gas boilers. We've become more aware in recent years of the effects of air pollution from various sources on our health.



Since 31st January 2023, councils have been instructed by government to issue on-the-spot fines of £300 for households flouting air pollution rules for wood-burning stoves. In the worst cases, offenders could face criminal prosecution and a fine of up to £5,000 with an extra £2,500 a day. Welwyn is not in a smoke-controlled area, so we're not likely to have council officials knocking on our doors and readers don't need to report neighbours with smoking chimneys to the environmental health department.

Whatever the age of our stoves we may carry on using them. But from 1st Jan 2022, it has been illegal to manufacture and sell new stoves that do not comply with new *Eco Design* regulations. *Eco Design* ready stoves can offer a 90% reduction in particulates compared to an open fire and 80-94% compared to an old stove.

Clean Air Day (a national initiative supported by WHBC) this year will be on 15 June.

John Mitchell and Valerie Richards

CORONATION POSTER COMPETITION



To mark the Coronation of King Charles III, Welwyn Community Library is inviting local primary school-aged children to produce a poster that celebrates this event.

The subject can be anything that is relevant

It must be portrait in aspect on A4 white paper or preferably card

It should be very colourful

Closing date is Friday 14th April

Prizes of book tokens will be awarded for the best entries in Key Stage 1 and 2 and the overall winner will have their artwork reproduced on the front cover of the May Welwyn Magazine. Please ensure the child's name, age and school year are included with the poster, together with a contact telephone number. Entries can be received by any schools co-ordinating this activity or in Welwyn Community Library

The library is open Tuesday – Friday from 2 – 5 pm and Saturday from 10 am – 1 pm

Jane Carr

CHRISTIAN AID SOUPER SOUP LUNCH

We used to have an annual House to House collection for Christian Aid in Welwyn and Woolmer Green in which we used to collect about £4000. Times have changed. Firstly Covid prevented House to House collections. Secondly fewer and fewer people were willing to knock on doors. In addition fewer people have any ready cash either because of the cashless society or because of straightened circumstances. I therefore started arranging an alternative fund raising event. A Christian Aid Lunch during Lent. Friends and I make a range of soups which are then sold at a Souper Soup Lunch in Church House. The lunch consists of a bowl of home-made soup, bread and butter. This has proved to be very popular Every year we make over £400 which is sent to Christian Aid. This year Christian Aid have been particularly busy working in Ukraine and are now in earthquake-struck Turkey and Syria. So we hope to make even more money this year!

Please along this year,. You will be very welcome. See below.

Sue Keach

Join us for lunch
and a taste of an
end to poverty



To: **Everyone**
Date/time: **March 30th 12-1.30pm**
Where: **Church House Welwyn**
RSVP: **Just Turn Up**



We believe in life before death

WNHS TOM GLADWIN

Our Natural History Society held its Annual General Meeting in January when its President, Tom Gladwin, announced that it was time for him to step down. This prompted me to ask him a few questions and some of the answers amazed me – and, I hope will amaze you too.



Tom started our society in 1964, nearly 60 years ago, together with Dr. Oliver Dansie – well known to many of you as our GP for many, many years. So... how old were they then? Tom in his late twenties and Oliver in his early thirties. They must have been a couple of tear-aways although very well-educated ones! Tom told a few tales out of school at our AGM: how, for instance, Oliver used to visit patients with a white rat sticking out of each trouser pocket (!) ... how, also, he was fascinated by deer and put four of them into Knebworth Park one night only to decide to break in some time later to remove them!

But back to Tom: he started off as a bird watcher and has a list of involvements with many, many Bird Groups, too many to list here, and was also one of the authors of the *The Birds of Hertfordshire*. But, seemingly, anything that was alive and flew interested him: lacewings, dragonflies, damselflies...nothing about aeroplanes but railways... YES! And he founded both the Lemsford Springs and Amwell Nature Reserves and, in his spare time, was ordained as a Minister in the Church of England. Having been born in Hertford, one of his heroes was John Russel Wallace about whom he gave a talk at the joint meeting of the Herts Natural History Soc. and the Welwyn Soc. a few years ago.

He was waxing lyrical at the AGM about the value of the Panshanger Nature Reserve and the Amwell Reserve – both very important for the world-renowned chalk stream that runs through them and also for the seeds that have been discovered indicating the ecology of the sites over thousands of years. Tom's depth of knowledge is awesome and we have been so honoured to have him as our President. Thank you, Tom!

Judith Watson

WNHS DYEING

Nature's rainbow
coloured plant dyed
wool



Our first meeting of our new year, on Wednesday, 22nd March, at 8.00pm is all about **DYEING** Yes, you read that correctly – there's an 'e' in the middle and the title of talk in our new programme is:

“Chemistry, Ecology, Competition and Colour” a gardener’s perspective by Susan Dye.... such an interesting play on words there!

It sounds as though this will be a different sort of evening. Natural dyes have a long and fascinating history, closely intertwined with the development of both chemistry and botany. Replaced by synthetic dyes in the late 19th Century, plant-based dyes are once again of interest to an industry striving to meet the demand for sustainable sources of colour.

There has been a surge of interest in natural dyeing, particularly on social media, which has popularised a host of different plants that can be used for dyeing; Susan will be telling us about the plant species yielding useful colour that may be found growing wild in Hertfordshire and in the UK as a whole. She will also cover some of the insect species these plants support and, I think, get us to wonder about the role of dye molecules in the evolution of plant species... now that's a big ask! Plant dyed textile samples will be available to handle and dye plant seeds available to purchase.

Susan Dye and Ashley Walker have a small but productive dye garden in Hitchin. For over 15 years they have been growing and using northern European dye plants ranging from the classic woad, weld and madder to some more unusual plants. They also maintain a website on dye plant horticulture, which has brought them many wonderful connections with people around the globe. Susan is particularly interested in the red dyes in madder and related plants. Ashley is very good at growing and dyeing with woad and Japanese indigo for blues. They believe that growing your own colour profoundly changes your relationship to textiles and goes a little way towards changing consumption habits for the better.

Judith Watson

KNEBORTH AMATEUR THEATRE GROUP



KATS has been a well established Amateur Theatrical group for some 75 years presenting wide ranging productions including Shakespeare comedies and serious plays every year in Spring and Winter.



We are looking for new members to join us. If performing on stage isn't your thing, we have a very wide range of other activities including Lighting, Sound, Stage Management, Props, as well as Producing and Directing. The added bonus of course is that you will have great fun and meet and make new friends with an amazing bunch of fellow enthusiasts.

The outbreak of COVID has affected all our lives and for an organisation like KATS with its close social interaction, the COVID restrictions have seriously damaged our ability to stage any plays over the last 3 years. It will be recalled that in December 2021 'the Fleet Street Nativity' was within 24 hours of being performed when it was forced to cancel due to a COVID outbreak amongst the cast.

Since then, due to a variety of reasons including the retirement and relocation of key members it has not been possible to stage another production and consideration has been given to wind up the group. This would be a serious blow and a significant loss to the community but happily there is a hardcore group of members that is determined to continue and in the interim KATS will continue as a reading group until such time as the numbers grow sufficiently to mount a new production.

Come and join us! - Interested and want to learn more? Then please contact us:

Email: martin@starfishpc.co.uk

Mobile: 07854 079286

Landline: 01438 313385

Website: www.katsdrama.info

LENT GROUPS 2023

This year in Lent we are looking at the Psalms in the bible, in a Lent course written by our curate and old testament scholar, Christie Gilfeather.

David Munchin

(Groups start after the first Sunday of Lent – there are five weeks in the course)

Tuesday 7.30 – St Michael’s Woolmer Green group

Led by Christie Gilfeather, 01438 561702, hosted by Sue Keach, 01438 716657

Wednesday 10.30am St Mary’s Church House,

Led by David Munchin, 01438 714150

Wednesday 7.45 for 8pm,

Led by Gay and Mike Carpenter 01438 718439

Thursday 7pm Datchworth Church hall Led by Susannah Underwood, 01438 817183 (beginning with soup and cheese supper)

Thursday 7pm at Codicote Parish Centre (next to St Giles Church), led by Ryan Gilfeather 01438 561702, and Catherine Jupp.

Friday 9.30am Time for God Group at St Mary’s Church House Contact Mavis Francis 01438 487851 and Marcia Khan 07845752250

Friday 12:30pm

Led by Edward Cardale and Mick Simmons, 01438 817183 Beginning with soup lunch

PCC MEETING 18th JANUARY 2023

The Rector/Chairman opened the meeting in the customary manner.

The **minutes of the 22nd November 2022 meeting** were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

Finance – The treasurer (Maggie Varco) had circulated her report prior to the meeting. She informed the meeting that Barclays Bank are conducting a periodic review which has shown that the main account at St Michael’s has 19 names as trustees but several of them have long since resigned. This needs to be updated but isn’t a simple matter as trustees must present themselves in branch to be removed from the record. Telephone banking – the facility is in place but has Donald Bell (former treasurer) as the authorised person. The changeover to Maggie Varco needs to be done. All present agreed and signed the necessary authorisation.

At St Michael’s a good income is earned from allowing the Romanian Orthodox Church to hold their services there. Unfortunately the priest who requested and entered into the arrangement with the Rector is moving on so it is hoped that his congregation will continue to hire St Michael’s.

Maggie Varco advised that retiring collections from musical recitals are to contribute to the choral scholarships being arranged by the new(ish) Director of Music, Rob Milner and the Rector.

Fabric – Sue Keach reported that at St Michael’s gutters are leaking/overflowing resulting in water running down the church wall. There are also loose or missing roof tiles to be dealt with. Sue has been unable to contact her preferred roofing contractor but will wait a little longer before looking for an alternative. Both Vernonne Allan and Diane Jenkin offered to provide names when/if required.

Sue also noted that the “organ grinders” (otherwise known as repairers) had commenced repairs and improvements to – guess what? Yes, the organ at St Michael’s.

Christie Gilfeather advised that a new back door had recently been fitted at St Michael’s House to replace the old one that was not weather tight, for which she thanked the PCC.

Stuart Jenkin had circulated his fabric report prior to the meeting. In his absence Diane Jenkin advised that a ‘phone call had been received from Francesca Weal (architect) to make an appointment to carry out the overdue quinquennial report on St Mary’s building. Diane Jenkin also mentioned that the gutters at St Mary’s are due to be cleaned and repaired in the week commencing 23rd January to fix a leak through the roof of the vestry.

Rector’s Items – The recently instituted choral scholarships - the Director of

PCC MEETING 18th JANUARY 2023 (CONTINUED)

Music, the accompanist and the Rector were due to audition prospective candidates on 24th January.

It was noted that the choir is ‘going well’ under the auspices of Robert Milner.

Church calendar:-

Shrove Tuesday 22nd February. There will be a pancake race. Members of the PCC are expected to put up a team!

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent – 23rd February. The usual Lent groups will take place. The course will be on Psalms.

Tuesday 7th March – Rota evening to organise Sunday rotas, to thank the incumbents with a drink and train new volunteers. If you haven’t already volunteered please consider doing so. As he has previously said the rector cannot run St Mary’s single-handed. Support from members of the PCC will be appreciated that evening.

25th March – Mission Action Planning meeting.

Crystal Lam’s email on the subject of **care of the elderly** was circulated to the PCC prior to the meeting in which she detailed progress in contacting various organisations to visit and, in some instances, to give a talk. Dates to be agreed with Marcia Khan for the Fellowship Group and informal visits to be arranged with Liz Hesketh at the Community Café . Crystal to write an article for this magazine.

Giving Action Group – Their report had been circulated by Geoff Cummings in advance of the meeting. It was unanimously agreed that food bank and ‘shoebox’ donations should be valued at £3,000 to cover the shortfall of cash for GAG to donate to various charities. It was also agreed to maintain 15% of church income as an aspirational target for 2023.

Safeguarding – no safeguarding issues had been reported.

Appointments and resignations – Rob Milner has a pool of three organists to call on.

The PCC unanimously approved Stuart Jenkin as a governor of St Mary’s School. Karen Poultney was unanimously approved as a governor for St Michael’s School.

Any other business – Sue Keach proposes to hold Souper Soup Lunch in Church House on Thursday 30st March. David Munchin agreed to prepare a quiz for the Christian Aid fundraiser on 20th May.

David Hughes

WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL



Consult. Consult. Consult. I thought as Marj is away on holiday and I've ended up with the Parish Council pen, I'd take this chance to write about consultation.

Being invited to participate in a consultation should not be viewed as a chore or a sop – it's a vital part of our democratic process. People quite understandably get miffed when not asked their view on something that affects them. That's not the same as your view always prevailing nor there the views of those alternatives are too popular either.

Over the time I have been a Parish Councillor we have responded to many consultations: our Borough Council on a variety of topics, especially the Local Plan; County Council on their various Transport Plans (usually highways-related), national government (typically Highways England) over the A1(M) "smart" motorway, Luton Airport on proposed expansion and increased flights and many more.

We often get asked directly for our input but sometimes we get missed/ignored/avoided/ only to find out very late-on. It is then an uphill fight to find out the detail and prepare a response. It's usually our Planning & Licensing Committee who write the reply, as they have Council's delegated authority to do so as they meet regularly every 3 weeks. Some brave soul will do the research, consider the impact on the parish and if we should take any specific stance and draft a response which is then circulated for comment via e-mail to other committee members. With luck we can do that, agree it at a regular meeting and then our Clerk send in our formal reply by the due date; that's how it's done! As I write this article we have over the past couple of months responded to Borough's invitation to consider the village Conservation Area boundary and possibly change or retain it as is; the latest iteration of their Local Plan (Main Modifications, including revised Sustainability and Habitat Assessments); a company wanting to build a private solar farm at The Ayots; the local group application for village green status for Singlers Marsh and just in is one from Highways who seek views on their ideas for improving the B197 from Oaklands to Woolmer Green.

These responses are compiled and read in private time by volunteer Councillors and we are fortunate to have several non-Councillors (e.g. from Welwyn Planning and Amenity group) who will also chip in their thoughts. We try to keep the responses politically neutral and base our stance on the effect on our parish and residents. However, these are important matters. We are not afraid to object when we have sound reasons to believe the impact will be negative for our parish and we also give our positive support when appropriate.

WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL (Cont)

Changing tack slightly onto consultation for our Neighbourhood Plan, we are continuing with our useful and popular informal events on our draft plan; these will soon include small, more private “drop-in” sessions at our parish offices on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons in February and March – lookout for opportunities! You can ask about any aspect or just have a general discussion. We offer the bribe of a cup of tea! There will also be a session for businesses as we need to be aware of their concerns and wishes and we will try to hold specific sessions for Digswell and Oaklands. These events take quite a bit of effort to set up so please don’t be shy – come along and add in your two-pennyworth!

So, this consultation lark does take time but I doubt any of us would have it any other way – residents must have their say. Democracy didn’t just happen overnight and many still labour long to ensure it continues - certainly around the world. If you want to get more involved locally, as: a Councillor, a co-opted member of a specific committee, an attendee (since all of our Full Council and Committee meetings have a slot at the start for members of the public to have a say), you certainly can! Our Community Engagement Committee may be a good start as we instituted this as a less formal opportunity for wider discussion of topics to be raised directly by residents. Please see our meetings calendar on our web site or ask our Clerk for meeting details.

Our Council has set its budget for 2023/24 and this will involve no increase in the notional Band D effective contribution to the precept. We have been helped considerably in this by venue hire income from a steady increase in bookings, especially for the Civic Centre. Thanks to Susan who handles the bookings and plays such an important role; to MPS who keep the building in good order and to Maria the caretaker for her unfailing effort and cheerfulness. This enables us to give discounted hall hire to charity and groups such as mothers and toddlers – all part of our support for residents (of all ages).

Finally, I would like to introduce our new Deputy Clerk – Arooj Afzal - who joined us in mid-January. Once up to speed, she will be looking after Allotments, Cemetery, Planning, Accounts and our Neighbourhood Plan; we welcome her to our team.

Councillor Bill Morris
Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Office Email: office@welwynpc.org.uk
Office Telephone: 01438 716667

SATURDAY CONCERTS

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

The concerts are free to attend. There is a retiring collection for Church Funds. A proportion will provide a contribution towards the Choral Scholarships which are being arranged by the Director of Music, Rob Milner. Thanks to increasing audience numbers modest fees can now be offered to performers, and these are especially appreciated by those young people who are still studying at the Royal Academy and similar world-class institutions

Saturday 11 March at 12 noon - Alla Kravchuk (soprano) and Rob Milner (baritone) with Oksana Hermanchuk (piano)

The Ukrainian soprano Alla Kravchuk was born in Kyiv and studied at the Kyiv Conservatoire before establishing her career in Germany. As a soloist with the Hanover State Opera she appeared as *Melisande* at the Edinburgh International Festival. In 2008 Alla made her debut at the Semperoper Dresden as *Susanna* in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. She has also performed as a soloist with Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Theater Freiburg, Staatstheater Nürnberg, and the Weimar Opera. Now resident in St Albans, Alla also happens to be the singing teacher of St Mary's Director of Music - Rob Milner



The Red Lion 'Country pub and dining' on the B197 near Ayot Green is a popular venue and they are now supporting our Saturday concerts. In addition to displaying our posters etc they are offering a **10% discount** on the food element of a (party's) bill to anyone who has attended a Saturday concert and brings along a copy of the programme notes. This offer will apply from 1pm onwards on each Saturday Recital day. Please spread the word. I ought not to be eating them myself (being diabetic), but I can say that their pizzas are the best I know around Welwyn and WGC.

Stephen Foster

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MARDLEY HEATH WI REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

Ode to our speaker, Sarah Harrison (author and raconteur).

Sarah was a gift on a cold January night
Her anecdotes took us on a fantastic flight
We roamed through subjects she painted
in words
While images in our heads soared like
birds
From the annual Christmas letter that
leaves you cowed
It comes through your letterbox and
makes you groan aloud
Oh no! Not again the story of holidays
abroad
Their little one who is a genius, dear little
Maud!
Where you want to retaliate with tales of
your own
Which are so farfetched, it would make
you moan!
Sarah moved with ease, laughter and fun
Through things she had noted and over
the years done
The sat-nav – does it have a mind of its
own?
Regardless of input takes you to a destina-
tion unknown
A cordless vacuum which refuses to work
“Oh for goodness sake! What a jerk!
I wanted that feather picked up”, she said
But would the rascally thing be fed?
Road signs came in for their fair share of
being totally ambiguous
This was a theme which was totally con-
tinguous
Eg. “Emergency WC – 20 miles”. Oh no,
not really?



“Nursery Stud”, how totally silly!
“All road sign erections must be lit” –
Could this be chilly?
“Who writes these?” one asks – what a
silly billy!
She took us through our youth, our days
of yore
The Jean Shrimpton look and Twiggy
eyelashes, we wanted more
Of suspenders we wore which were a fag
And thick woollen stockings, which
around ankles sag
We laughed with her through stories ga-
lore
She certainly left us wanting more!
So thank you Sarah you were exactly right
And perfect for a cold January night
I speak on the ladies of our WI’s behalf
You were a ray of sunshine – you made us
laugh!

Most meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Oaklands Primary School, Gt North Road, Welwyn. For any additional information, please contact our Secretary by e-mail at: secretary.mhwi@gmail.com
New members and visitors are always welcome.

Brenda Bigland CBE

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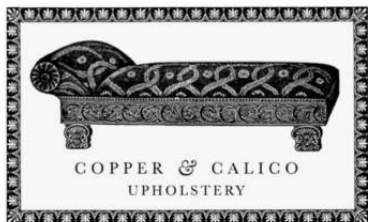
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WHAT IS IN YOUR CAR?

There have been several thefts from cars in the Welwyn area over the past few months. In these recent cases, the vehicle was parked outside the owner's home at the time, and the victims lost possessions and had the expense and inconvenience of having to repair broken windows and forced doors.



There are some simple measures you can take to make your car a less likely target for this type of crime. Although this sounds insultingly obvious, make sure your car is locked when not in use. It is easy to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecured. Criminals look out for cars they know have wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, so it is easy for them to spot a car that is open.

People are often surprised that their car is burgled when it contains nothing of much value. Thieves will smash a side window to get something as simple as an old jacket off your seat, in the hope that you've left a wallet inside.

Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. It goes without saying that you should never leave obvious valuables such as wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards in an unattended vehicle. If you have to leave something valuable in your car for a short time, put it in the boot where it cannot be seen.

If you have electronic devices in your car, such as a separate satnav, make sure there are no mounts, suction cup marks or cables on view as this gives away that you own the device and thieves will guess that it is stored in your glove compartment. Remember that if thieves gain access to your car, they will search the glove compartment so never leave important documents inside.

Many car insurance policies only allow claims up to a relatively low value for items left loose in your car. Check your own policy but you could be seriously out of pocket if you lose valuables in this way.

John Mitchell and Valerie Richards

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The NHS App will not replace existing services. You can still contact your GP surgery in the usual ways if you prefer. For example, by visiting or telephoning your practice.

Use the app to:

- book and cancel appointments
- view your record
- order repeat prescriptions
- check your symptoms
- register your organ donation decision
- find out how the NHS uses your data

The NHS App should not be confused with the NHS COVID-19 App.

Downloading the NHS App on a mobile device:

1. Open the App Store or Play Store.
2. Search for 'NHS App' and select install.

After installing, select the app to open it.

If you'd like to find out more about the NHS App visit www.nhs.uk/app

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NEWS FROM WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

2023/24 Parish Council Budget

The Parish Council has reviewed its finances and plans closely over the last few months as it set the budget for 2023/24. Hall lettings income has been lower than planned in 2022/23 and there was a significant investment in renovating the tennis court so there are no major projects planned for the coming year.

The precept income will be increased by 5% to help cover rising costs but there are more homes in the village so the increase per household is less than this – a Band D property is expected to pay £1.85pa more than 2022/23 towards the Parish and will still be paying less than in 2021/22. After reviewing other local halls’ pricing, the Parish Council has decided to increase its hall hire charges from April.

The Hall heating system has had some issues over the years and the Parish Council is looking at upgrading it to make it more efficient and to be able control it better.

Local Plan

The Parish Council is still very unhappy with the excessive housing growth planned for Woolmer Green in the Local Plan and, in particular, for the plan to build housing on the Green Belt farmland behind Lessiters. The Parish Council has responded again to the Local Plan Main Modifications consultation setting out objections and has written again to Mr Gove, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about the situation .

B197 Safer routes to school

Hertfordshire County Council will be starting public engagement on Oaklands and Woolmer Green Safer Routes to School projects from 31 January until 27 February 2023. The website will be live from 31 January at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/activetravelfund. Please have a look at the proposals and provide your views and suggestions.

Finally – dates for the diary

Wheels on Woolmer Green – Monday 1 May

Village Day – Sunday 4 June

Woolmer Green’s first Food Festival – Sunday 20 August

Sarah Hall
Woolmer Green Parish Council
sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk

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THIS IS MY KIND OF MEETING

As St Michael's is a daughter church in the St Mary's parish it does not have its own Parish Church Council but has representatives on the St Mary's PCC.

What we do have is a Church Meeting for members of the congregation every two months. (I was going to write bimonthly but I looked it up and found out that bimonthly can mean either twice a month or every two months)

We used to hold these meetings in the Church on a Monday evening but many are reluctant to come out on a dark cold night. The Rector, who enjoys his food, had a moment of inspiration. Our Sunday services finish between 12.15 pm and 12.30pm. Why not have the meetings, after our morning service, in the Red Lion whilst having lunch? Arrangements were made with the landlady, Jackie, for us to use the room at the back of the pub. The first meeting was held on the 15th of January!

The meeting went with a swing. It is amazing how quickly decisions involving the running of the church could be taken when accompanied by a pint of beer or a glass of red wine. Our brains were in overdrive fed by a delicious Sunday Lunch. It was an experiment to be repeated. We had a much improved attendance and all enjoyed the feeling of togetherness not always present in a cold dark church.

The landlady Jackie is a great supporter of local institutions including St Michael's and has already, last year, held a raffle from which the proceeds were given to St Michael's. On this occasion she had held a "guess the number of football sweets in a bottle". She kindly gave us the proceeds which were a hundred pounds.



Sue Keach

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FORWARD PLANNING FOR THE TWILIGHT YEARS

Casting my mind back to 2008, 2010 and 2021, I had the honour to be in charge of arranging the funerals for my father, mother in Hong Kong and my brother in Toronto. Each piece of devastating news caught me completely by surprise and despite being in a state of shock, I left for where they had lived as soon as I could manage, to make the funeral arrangements. I was determined to do the right thing for my kin. Sadly, death being a subject of taboo and culturally considered an inauspicious subject matter, my family never had any discussion on wills, power of attorney and funeral arrangements.

Fast forward to 2022, a recent health scare put the spotlight on one's own mortality. I reflected on all the eventualities that could befall me and my husband and I was motivated to make the necessary forward planning for my own twilight years, including a living will, power of attorney, writing a will, and specifying my preferences on "Do not resuscitate", care arrangement, funeral service and burial in consecrated ground. I set out to seek information and guidance on identifying the options and finding the answers for myself and my husband. During this process, it became clear to me that the same information and awareness could benefit many elderly, dependents or/and carers in the community. That prompted me, back in July last year, to involve the PCC in these initiatives. Since then, I gave updates on progress at the September and November 2022 PCC meetings and most recently at the January 2023 PCC meeting.

I am happy to report that the following agencies, charity organisations, and care service provider which I have contacted are welcoming the initiative. They would like to make the elderly aware of the services and aid which they can provide. They would also like to help the elderly with their forward planning for all eventualities.

Citizen Advice Welwyn Hatfield

Carers in Herts

Isabel Hospice

The next action is to invite a representative from each of the organisations to come to the Community Café to chat informally and to leave literature. I am finalising a programme of these presentations and I aim to start them in April. The dates will be published in the April Parish magazine. I look forward to seeing you at what, I hope, will be some interesting and informative meetings.

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Church Notice Board

ST MARY'S - Welwyn www.welwyn.org.uk

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

Confessions By arrangement with the Clergy.
The Ministry of Counsel and Absolution is available to anyone who seeks it at any time.

Clergy Surgery Hour

Saturdays 10.00 am to 11.00 am
A member of the team will be available in church for any enquiries. Mainly intended for Baptisms or Weddings, but not exclusively restricted to those matters.

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

Sunday	11.15 am
1st and 4th Sundays	Parish Eucharist:
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+)
Sunday	11.00 am and 6.30 pm	(Facilities for young children)
Wednesday	8.00 pm	Bible Study (except 3rd Wednesday)

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4th Sunday	11.00 am Family Service
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*If that's a bit early, services of one hour start at 11.15 at both at St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green and at St. Peter's Church at Ayot St Peter.

COMFORT MY PEOPLE

'Comfort, comfort my people' says the Lord.

Yet, to comfort God's people is not easy. Our times have seen an unprecedented rise in the homeless, in food banks, in families struggling to cope with problems. In our communities the people who might need a listening ear or a simple word of kindness are without number. Consider, for example, the practical needs of those who surround us: elderly people housebound either in their own homes or in a residential facility; the newly bereaved; the friend waiting for a hospital appointment which could bring bad news; the young couple with a breakdown in their relationship; the family protecting a person with a drug habit. The list goes on...

Continued on Page 48

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COMFORT MY PEOPLE (Continued)

Continued from page 46

Sometimes we may feel a sense of helplessness. We cannot bring an end to the suffering of others. Often we cannot make things better, no matter how much we would like to. Our words to others in grief and loss, in desolation, may be well meant but often fall far short. And we can suffer from what has been referred to as compassion-fatigue.

Whether in our own families, in our own communities, in the wider world, the needs of this world are endless. Can we really bring into our innermost being the immeasurable pain of this world, its struggles, its cries, its brokenness?

We cannot, but God can. Priest and theologian Henri Nouwen once said, 'I cannot embrace the world, but God can. I cannot pray, but God can pray in me.' Although our spontaneous response is often to flee from suffering or to try to find a quick cure for it, perhaps what God longs for is that our prayer is accompanied by those small acts of compassion and kindness which are within the reach of us all. Comfort for his people is expressed through practical means, sometimes simply by listening, sometimes merely being present at a time of need or just through simple kindness.

It has been said that kindness is the overflowing of self upon others. We change places with others and treat them as we would wish to be treated ourselves. Kindness is like a divine grace which opens up endless possibilities for light and life and new growth.

As the world turns towards the spring and we welcome with joy the signs of new growth all around us we might recall the words of pioneer and writer Amelia Earhart: 'A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.'

The author Mark Twain was to say, 'kindness is a language the deaf can hear, the blind can see.' In the Kingdom of God there is no such thing as a small act of kindness, as every act of kindness by us has a ripple effect the extent of which goes far beyond our conscious knowledge and awareness.

'Comfort, comfort my people,' says the Lord. It is a sacred duty.

Usha Hull