Village News

March 2019

Your independent village magazine - produced and delivered free to every home in the Tring Rural villages entirely by local volunteers.

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We depend on readers' articles and pictures. So let's have them!

A hall in danger

by Martin Kelly

Long Marston's Victory Hall, at the heart of the village for nearly 70 years is now in need of major structural repairs. Please come to the public meeting on evening of the **7th March**, for a presentation starting at 7:30pm and a chance to have your say about the future of the hall to keep it at the core of the community for the next 70 years. See page 5 for further details of the event.

Robin Hood and

LONG MARSTON AND PUTTENHAM

See the back page for more on this year's panto spectacular held, where else? but in Long Marston's Victory Hall!

Photos by John Kaye

the babes in the wood

The Oscars 2019

by Colin Davenport

A RESIDENT of Wilstone has been nominated for an Oscar at the LA awards ceremony on February 24th in the category 'Best Make-up & Hairstyling'.

Jessica Brooks who works as a make-up artist has been nominated for her work in the film **Mary Queen of Scots**. By the time you read this we will know if she was successful along with her colleagues Jenny Shircore and Marc Pilcher.

Jessica graduated in 2000 with BA 1st Class Honours in Print Media Surface Design gained at London College of Communication (formerly London College of Printing). Followed in 2003 by a hair make-up and prosthetic course at Greasepaint (Ealing) and in 2005 an Advance Prosthetic Application Course at Gorton Studios. Since then she has worked in TV and Film as a freelance prosthetic make-up artist. Her work includes X-Men First Class, World War Z, Guardians of the Galaxy, Pan, The Huntsman - Winter's War, Doctor Strange, King Arthur - The Last Knight, Game of Thrones, Fantastic Beasts - The Crimes of Grindelwald and Maleficent 2 which is in Post Production and of course Mary Queen of Scots.

The filming of Mary Queen of Scots was carried out at Pinewood studios as well as many other locations including Derbyshire, Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds. Jessica was specifically brought in as principle make-up artist to do the prosthetic make up for Margot Robbie who played the part of Queen Elizabeth.

Margot Robbie, before and after

Jessica moved to Wilstone in November 2017 along with her husband Jacob who also works in the film industry as an assistant cameraman.

The finished article, Margot as QE 1

Strangely in 2018 a friend of Jessica's, David Malinowski, who lives locally in Aston Clinton won the same award for his work on Gary Oldman as Winston Churchill in **The Darkest Hour.** This was the latest film to have been shown at the Wilstone Film Night in February.

Jessica at work Photo courtesy of Focus Films LA

We wish Jessica the best of luck in Los Angeles and hope to have a photograph of her holding the Oscar at the ceremony for the next edition of *Village News*

Village News

Editor this month: Colin Moore
Editorial Team
Colin Davenport, Caroline Clist, Paul Lovis, John McCall and Colin Moore.

email: **editorwlmp@yahoo.com**
Post: 40 Tring Road Wilstone HP23 4PB
Phone: Colin Moore 01442 826976

Distribution Manager
John Taylor 07940 206056
Finance Manager & Treasurer
Keith Fox 01442 825846
Advertising Manager
Amanda Russell 07885 891634
email: villagenewsadvertising@googlemail.com

AND in a packed edition this month, get up to date with your local show-biz news (on the cover sheets) and learn about the results of the Parish Council working parties (in the centre section).

Richard Curtis, writer of British rom-com films, is a late convert to pantomime and highlighted in the Evening Standard that it is the only form of art native to this country, so well done to all; whether behind the scenes, on the stage or in the stalls for your contribution to our country's artistic endeavour.

On a more serious note, you are encouraged by our current Parish Council chairman to consider whether becoming a Councillor is for you; see pages 10 and 15. We have full details of official Parish Council business with our regular report of the meeting.

My thanks to the many contributors to this edition, we have had to include extra pages to fit your articles in. Many were provided early, which certainly made the editing easier to manage and was much appreciated by me. Whether you are a contributor and/or reader I hope that you find this month's edition lives up to our aim.

The next edition will be for April and the deadline for items for inclusion is: Wednesday 20 March2019.

Village News is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. Only the final printing is done by a commercial company. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read.
Let us know if we are not!

Printed by ***Lonsdale Direct Solutions***
Denington Estate, Wellingborough, NN8 2RA 01933 228855.

Church services

St Mary's Puttenham
St Cross Wilstone and
All Saints Long Marston

You are most welcome to join us at any of the services

3rd March 2019
10.00am – Sunday Worship at All Saints, Long Marston
10.00am – Holy Communion at St Cross, Wilstone
3.30pm – Holy Communion bcp at St Mary's, Puttenham

6th March 2019
10.00am – Ash Wednesday HC at St Cross, Wilstone

10th March 2019 – 1st Sunday of Lent
10.00am – Holy Communion at All Saints, Long Marston
10.00am – Sunday Worship at St Cross, Wilstone
3.30pm – Service of Light at St Mary's, Puttenham
6.00pm – Evening Prayer at All Saints, Long Marston

17th March 2019 – 2nd Sunday of Lent
10.00am – Worship for All at All Saints, Long Marston
10.00am – Holy Communion at St Cross, Wilstone
3.30pm – Taize Service at St Mary's, Puttenham

24th March 2019 – 3rd Sunday of Lent
10.00am – Holy Communion at All Saints, Long Marston
10.00am – Worship for All at St Cross, Wilstone
3.30pm – Evensong at St Mary's, Puttenham

26th March 2019
10.00am –Holy Communion at St Cross, Wilstone

31st March 2019 4th Sunday of Lent & Mothering Sunday
10.00am – Holy Communion CW at All Saints, Long Marston
10.00am – Holy Communion CW at St Cross, Wilstone
3.30pm – Service of Light at St Mary's, Puttenham

All Saints Long Marston

Read *Village News* online at:
www.wilstone.me (Click on Village News)

What's on...

Diary Dates..

Thursday 7 March
Saving Victory Hall, from 6pm, Long Marston Victory Hall
Tuesday 12 March
Bomb Disposal Expert Talk 8pm, Long Marston Victory Hall
Wednesday 13 March
Wednesday at One, 1-5:30pm Long Marston Victory Hall
Friday 15 March
Film Night "Bohemian Rhapsody" 7:30pm Wilstone Village Hall (see page 6).
Saturday 30 March
Tennis Club Quiz. 6:30 pm Long Marston Victory Hall
Saturday 6 April
Easter Egg Hunt, 11:30 Marsworth School (see pace 7)
Puttenham Jumble Sale
Wednesday 10 April
Wednesday at One, 1-5:30pm Long Marston Victory Hall
Friday 26 April
Cecilia Tea Rooms
Sunday 28 April
Tennis Club Open Afternoon 2pm, Long Marston Tennis Club
Monday 29 April
Flower arranging, 7:30pm Wilstone Church (see page 7)
Wednesday 1 May
6am May-Day Puttenham
Thursday 30 May
Badapple Theatre "The Frozen Roman", Puttenham
Sunday 23 June
Wilstone Open Village event
Friday 28 June
Cecilia Tea Rooms
Friday 9 August.
Cecilia Tea Rooms
Saturday 5 October
Puttenham Jumble Sale
Friday 11 October
Cecilia Tea Rooms
Saturday 26 October
Puttenham Trust's October Supper

Don't forget:
- the Lent lunches, see page 7 and
- the Lent Films, see page 9

CALLING ALL HOME AND SOLE WORKERS IN WILSTONE AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

If you work from home or have a small business, without much social interaction, do you want to meet with like minded people who could give you that interaction and perhaps share experiences and business advice?
I am one of those! Contact me if you are interested in meeting up once a month
Jo Woodbridge
Jowoodbridge3@gmail.com
01442 891444

Tring Rural Parish Council Meetings

Are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month. The public are welcome to attend these meetings.
Wed 6 March Puttenham hall 8.15pm
Wed 10 April Wilstone village hall 8.00pm
Parish Meeting Wed 6 March Puttenham hall 8.00pm

Yarn bombing Wilstone village!

Calling all enthusiastic knitters and crocheters.

We hope to decorate areas around Wilstone with a Gardens theme, to complement the Open Gardens and Village Event taking place on Sunday 23rd June 2019. The decorations might include creating flowers, vegetables, garden birds and creatures, as well as blankets and squares, all from yarn.

All ranges of skill and experience are welcome. If you are interested in dusting off your knitting needles or crochet hooks and getting involved in a fun activity, please contact Gail Short at gtshort39@gmail.com or phone 01442 823096 or 07712188347.

The Yarn Bombing items will be auctioned off at the end of the day, with the proceeds going towards the Save Our Shop fund.

WILSTONE OPEN GARDENS 2019

Are you willing and able to show off your lovely garden to the public on Sunday 23rd June next year? Please let me know Jo - 891444 or 07719 434620 jomark@waitrose.com

Tring & District Local History & Museum Society speaker programme March – July 2019

by Martin Wells

Wed 20 March 2019
Historic buildings legislation and local case studies
Rory Cullen

Rory Cullen is Director of Cullen Conservation, a Heritage Consultancy based in Tring, which he set up in December 2017 following his 15-year tenure as Head of Buildings for the National Trust. He is Chair of the Chartered Institute of Building *Conservation, Adaptation & Refurbishment* Faculty (CAR), which has set up the Heritage Certification Scheme. He will give a background of historic buildings legislation, then debunk some myths & provide some tips for anyone interested in historic or traditional (pre-1919) buildings. He will use case studies (including local ones) from the smallest vernacular cottages to the largest mansions.

Wed 15 May 2019
The story of Halton House
Trixie Brabner

Trixie Brabner is the archivist and tour co-ordinator at Halton House. After briefly introducing the Rothschilds and their houses in the Aylesbury Vale, she will talk about Alfred de Rothschild, the builder and original owner of Halton House, and show photographs showing the house as it was in the 1880s and 1890s and as it is today. The presentation will also include an explanation of how the house and the estate became the property of the Royal Air Force.

Wed 17 July 2019
Liberty: The Bucks man, the London shop, the global style
Will Phillips

Liberty, the iconic London shop, needs very little introduction. Yet the story of this world famous department store is full of surprises, from its historical connection to Buckinghamshire to the effects of wartime on the company's creative vision. Come and find out more at this talk by Will Phillips, Keeper of Social History at Bucks County Museum. Will studied History of Art and Architecture at Reading University before completing an MA in Museum Studies at University College London. He worked for nine years at the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading and moved to Bucks in 2008 as Keeper of Social History.

All meetings will be held at 8 pm at the High Street Baptist Church, Tring.
Visitors will be welcome on a donation of £4 per meeting.
Tring & District Local History & Museum Society
www.tringlocalhistorymuseum.org.uk

Has anyone got stables and grazing available for my two retired ponies please?

Tel. 07778802748

Open Mic Night

At the Queens Head every month

Wednesday at One

a social event for everyone in our local community

Long Marston Village Hall

Wednesday, 13 March & 10 April 2019

from 1.00pm to 5.30pm

This is the place to socialise with other villagers and discuss and exchange information about local matters. So, if you're at home looking after babies and toddlers, coming home from school, retired, home working or not working and want to get out of the house for an hour or two, you will be most welcome.

Refreshments will be on sale and there will be a variety of activities for all age groups which we hope you will find of interest.

If you would like further information or can help in any way, please get in touch with Kim Fox
kim.dixon@hotmail.co.uk

Wilstone Film Nights

Bohemian Rhapsody

With Rami Malek and Lucy Boynton

Bohemian Rhapsody is a foot-stomping celebration of Queen, their music and their extraordinary lead singer Freddie Mercury. Freddie defied stereotypes and shattered convention to become one of the most beloved entertainers on the planet. The film traces the meteoric rise of the band through their iconic songs and revolutionary sound. They reach unparalleled success, but in an unexpected turn Freddie, surrounded by darker influences, shuns Queen in pursuit of his solo career. Having suffered greatly without the collaboration of Queen, Freddie manages to reunite with his bandmates just in time for Live Aid. While bravely facing a recent AIDS diagnosis, Freddie leads the band in one of the greatest performances in the history of rock music. Queen cements a legacy that continues to inspire outsiders, dreamers and music lovers to this day.

FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2019

Tickets £7 suggested donation
available from Wilstone Community Shop.
Doors open 7.15pm Film starts at 8pm. Interval snacks. Licenced bar.

Marsworth Easter Egg Hunt

06/04/19

11.30am start from Marsworth School

Raffle

Tea & Cake

Face Painting

£4.50 per child

follow the magical trail to chocolate heaven

Churches Together in Tring

You are warmly invited to the following Lent Lunches in support of Christian Aid. They are held between 12 noon and 2pm and you can come along at any time that suits you. There is no set charge but hopefully you will donate to Christian Aid. Lunch is a bowl of soup, bread & cheese and a cup of tea or coffee.

Please note they are not always on a Wednesday this year.

Thursday 14th March New Mill Baptist Church

Friday 22nd March High Street Baptist Church

???????Wednesday 27th March ???????

Wednesday 3rd April St Cross, in Wilstone Village Hall

??????????Wednesday 10th April???????

Wednesday 17th April St Peter and St Paul Church Hall

christian aid

FLOWER ARRANGING WITH NEIL GURNEY

MONDAY 29TH APRIL
7.30
WILSTONE CHURCH

TICKETS £8 (INC.TEA/COFFEE)

PLEASE BOOK IN ADVANCE
PAM: (01442) 824394
OLGA:01442 822894

PROCEEDS TO FRIENDS OF ST. CROSS ACCESS FOR ALL APPEAL

12th March 2019

"40 Years Bomb Disposal - Still 10 Fingers" By Ian Jones MBE

1974 Northern Ireland, Ian's impressive and interesting career started - then worldwide. He joined the Counter Terrorist Command of the Metropolitan Police in 1994 and dealt with all incidents in London, he answered over 2000 calls for assistance in the following 18 years before retiring after the Olympics. And still found time to write two books.

Long Marston Village Hall
8pm Start
£5.00 Includes Refreshments

Another Local Event by
Long Marston & Puttenham WI

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Monday	9.30am	Wilstone Village Hall	Dance Vibe
	7.15pm	Cheddington Village Hall	Dance Vibe
Tuesday	9.30am	Cheddington Village Hall	Dance Vibe
	5.00pm	Wilstone Village Hall	Fit
	7.30pm	Gedlid School Tring	Dance Vibe
Wednesday	9.30am	Wilstone Village Hall	Strength40
	11.00am	Wilstone Village Hall Tring	Fit
	7.30pm	Pitstone Memorial Hall	Exercise
	5.00pm	Pitstone Memorial Hall	Strength40
Thursday	9.15am	Wilstone Village Hall	Fit
	7.00pm	Gedlid School Tring	Dance Vibe
Friday	9.15am	Wilstone Village Hall	Dance Vibe
Saturday	9.30am	Wilstone Village Hall	Dance Vibe

www.jazzercise.me/uk-aylesbury/tring-wilstone/
Contact Keri on 07900 907230 or email jazzercisebbg@jazzercise.net

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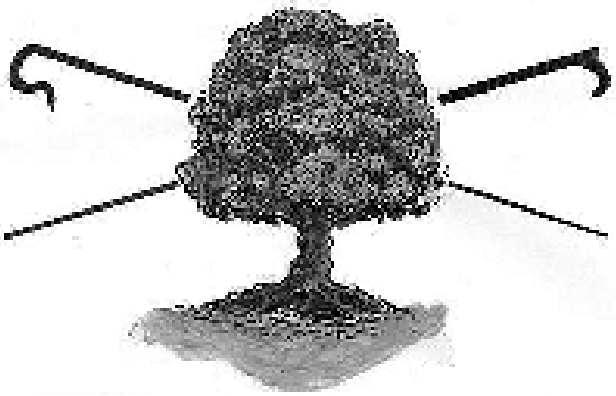
WILSTONE STICKS
Handcrafted by John Evans



Member of The British Stickmakers Guild

www.wilstonesticks.com
Telephone: 01442 822115

From the Vicarage

by Rev'd Jane Banister

MARCH sees the beginning of Lent, the six week preparation for Easter, that in this country coincides with spring. It is a good time to make resolutions, to decide on changes, all of which often seem easier to do as the days get longer, the temperature rises, and the flowers appear. So on Tuesday 5th March, we will eat lots of pancakes, drop some on the floor when the pancake tossing goes wrong, and eat up all the chocolate in the house. Then on Wednesday 6th March, we will start what we hope will be our yearly time of reflection and change. There will be a service at 10am at St Cross Wilstone, and another at 8pm at St Peter and St Paul Tring. Both will include the imposition of ashes, when ash made from last year's palm crosses is put on our forehead or hands as a sign of penitence and cleansing.

So what will we do this year? If one can manage it, then there are three aspects to Lent – pray, fast, and give. All of these are important things to do at any time of year, but it is good to be reminded of what they mean. And even if you do not consider yourself religious (whatever that might mean!), there is still much of value to be taken from Lent.

Prayer – maybe you want to make sure that you have a regular point of prayer; maybe you want to practice mindfulness. Maybe it is making sure you have at least an hour a day without the internet or your phone, or maybe it is making sure that you take a walk each day. It can be a daily change or a weekly one – a long walk every Sunday, a whole day without Facebook. Maybe it is going to the Tring Team Parish lent films in Aldbury every Sunday which this year are on Biblical characters. The idea of all of these is make us better people, and not to torment us (although if it does feel like torment, we probably do need to look at our lives!).

Fast – the media is full of suggested "healthy" ways to live. Go vegan, go teetotal, don't eat after 6pm, follow the paleo diet etc etc. Most of us know what we need to do to be better – eat less and move more. It is good to have a time without the foods we love, as it does make us appreciate them more. It also makes us realise how much we spend on them, and many people chose to give that money saved to a charity. But there are other things we can do – try and be less wasteful with our food, grow more ourselves even if it is herbs on a windowsill, make sure we buy fairtrade goods whenever possible.

Give – we all know how important it is to support charities, and we all have ones that are close to our hearts. Maybe this Lent is a time to find out about a new charity, to publicise it to others, to give time well as money, and to do all this not because we want to show how good we are, but because it is the right thing to do. To privately support a charity financially in a regular and gift aided way is as vital as all the fun and different public money raising activities that we do. Maybe it is about joining the parish £10 challenge – how much money can you make in six weeks to give to church or a charity?

So a challenge to myself – I can't ask others to do what I am not willing to. I will be at the Lent films and I will improve my evening prayer. I will give up alcohol, and I will be part of the £10 challenge.

Now over to you!

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from chaos through your Son, bring us healing and make us whole in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WI going green by Maggy Winship

As usual the year seems to be racing along, and we have been busy helping with village events such as the Panto and the new Wednesday at One club. Passers-by may have noticed that during February Green Hearts replaced our Poppy display of November around the Christmas Tree. This is the National WI campaign to show love for our environment and to encourage us all to live in a more "Green" way.

Our speaker in February was the very interesting Kamran Irani, who gave a fascinating talk about Blood Bikes. This is a national network of volunteers who transport live-saving blood and other urgently needed medical supplies (even breast milk for premature babies) between hospitals during the night.

In March we have invited Ian Jones, a prominent Bomb Disposal Expert to speak to us. As this promises to be such an interesting talk we will welcome any non-members (male or female) to come along for the talk and join us for refreshments afterwards.

From our reporter at the Parish Council meeting

Active Remainers

TWO councilors have resigned since this reporter's last attendance so there was concern that the trend would continue and that we might be seeing the fading of the bright new TRPC dawn that we have seen over the last two years. Fortunately there were no resignations this time and the Council showed itself to be as active as ever. There was an early discussion of whether replacement councilors should be co-opted but it was agreed that it was not worth doing so before the imminent elections in May.

Erecting a barrier

One result of attending council meetings is that I realize how many of us lead a sheltered life. At a previous meeting we heard of concerns about drug taking near Wilstone Village Hall. Now we learn that there is a proposal to erect a barrier to restrict entry to the Long Marston Village Hall Car Park, to prevent access by those who are involved in similar activity. There have also been reports about noise and bad language that have understandably concerned those living nearby. There was a discussion about the merits of cameras as an alternative and some concern was voiced about the danger of the problem being moved elsewhere. It was agreed that a paper produced by the Chairman, showing pros and cons of the barrier proposal, should be circulated for consultation.

Praise flooding in

When the working parties reported, the longest discussion was about the flooding issues, building on the successful public meeting held recently. The feedback on the presentations at this meeting was extremely positive and this was reinforced during the later question and answer session. The discussion brought out the practical difficulties of organizing ditch clearance and culvert repair, which helped those attending to appreciate the challenges ahead. One message in common from all the working parties was that the complexity and costs involved make immediate solutions difficult to achieve and it is best to think in terms of a two year time horizon to achieve all the objectives.

Unaffordable Development

An important item on the agenda was the consideration of a planning application for 15 two storey dwellings on the land off Tring Road, Wilstone. Councilor Ward made a comprehensive summary of some of the concerns about this development, including:

- That this application exceeds the requirement for affordable housing as revealed by the recent survey
- The possibility of further later expansion to more than double the dwellings in this proposal
- Doubts about genuine affordability
- Potential problems of flooding and sewage capacity
- Concerns about traffic over the road bridge

It was unanimously agreed that there should be a formal objection to this application.

Little Gems

At each meeting we always seem to hear a few reported gems that warm the heart:

- Councillor Chalmers reported that he had commissioned verge cutting but had ensured that the contract contained a 'daffodil clause'; not even the 585 pages of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement contains one of those!
- Councillor Hollinghurst reported progress on the Pump Track signage by declaring that the agreed sign was in his back garden

Tring Rural Parish Council Elections 2019

THE four-year term of office for Parish Councillors ends in May 2019, regardless of when they started. The number of seats to be filled for election is eight. Although existing Councillors (currently six at time of writing) may choose to run for re-election, this is an opportunity for anyone who would like to be a member of the Parish Council to put themselves forward.

For those of you who may be interested in being a Parish Councillor, some key dates for your diary are on the right:

Our Parish Council meetings are open to the public and usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. A visit to one of these meetings would give you a good insight into the functioning of the council and the work carried out by its councillors.

Also, a useful source of information is the 'Councillors' Guide 2018/19' which can be found online.

Nomination papers published by Dacorum BC	Not later than 26th March
Submission of Cllr nomination papers (by hand to Dacorum BC at The Forum in Hemel Hempstead)	By 4.0pm on Wednesday 3rd April
Nominations published	4pm Thursday 4th April
Notice of Poll	Wednesday 24th April
Polling Day	Thursday 2nd May 7am-10pm
Declaration of results	Most likely late on the Friday or Saturday morning
Change of Council	Tuesday 7th May (as Monday 6th is a bank holiday)
Annual Meeting	Wednesday 15th May 8pm start

Copies of nomination form to be held by Clerk and should also be available on DBC website

Parish Clerk and DBC to hold copy of electoral register for electoral role numbers

- It was reported that Herts CC were holding a prize draw and that the first prize is a defibrillator; not much fun for those who lose. We are to enter the draw on behalf of Puttenham Village Hall, the best of luck (and health) to Puttenham residents!
- There was a record achievement of FLAs (Four or five letter acronyms) per sentence in the agreement of training for the new Clerk to the Council; "fees for CILCA training to be paid to HAPTC and SLCC"

A hearing for everyone

This was a well attended meeting and the willingness to take questions at the end, and the positive responses by the Chairman, seemed to be much appreciated. One problem for the audience, particularly those whose ears have seen better days, is that sometimes it is hard to hear what is being said during the main meeting. This varies between councilors and increased volume would be much appreciated by TRPC's loyal fans at future meetings.

TRPC Budget for Year 2019-20

At the meeting in January, the Parish Council approved its annual budget and Precept for the coming year commencing 1st April 2019.

The Precept, which is collected through householders' Council Tax, was set at £26,330 – an increase of 0.9% on prior year. However, this will be reflected as a 2.2% decrease for a Band D property due to an increase in the number of Band D equivalent properties in the parish.

The Precept accounts for just over half of the Parish Council's income, the remaining £23k will be sourced mainly through the normal Herts. CC grants to cover a range of essential activities on their behalf. To a lesser extent, other sources of income will come from the rental of the Long Marston Changing Rooms, P3 grant for footpaths and Play Scheme entrance fees.

Total expenditure for the year is budgeted at £57,307 of which £13,124 (23%) will be supported from a portion of prior year reserves. These reserves are specifically targeted at non-routine expenses such as the upcoming parish council election in May, new Working Party projects and Play Schemes. The remaining expenditure of £44,183 covering the council's routine activities is broadly in line with this year's budgeted expenditure.

Lastly, the council has built up a healthy reserve position. These reserves are to cover future non-routine expenditure and new projects as well as providing a financial cushion in the event of some unexpected costs being incurred.

The Unallocated and CIL reserves give the Parish Council the freedom to identify and fund new programs and initiatives that will be of benefit to the community.

A detailed breakdown of TRPC's budget for Year 2019-20 can be found on its website: www.tringrural-pc.co.uk

Tring Rural Parish Council contacts

Your Parish Councillors are:

Malcolm Morgan (Chairman) 01296 661747
malcolm.morgan@tringrural-pc.co.uk

Doug Chalmers 07885 962818
doug.chalmers@tringrural-pc.co.uk

Nigel Fox 01296 662922
nigel.fox@tringrural-pc.co.uk

Peter Myrants 07968 109538
peter.myrants@tringrural-pc.co.uk

John Thirkettle 01296 661825
john.thirkettle@tringrural-pc.co.uk

Nici Ward 01296 668818
nici.ward@tringrural-pc.co.uk

The Clerk to the Council is :
Chloe Collins 07516 344248
clerk@tringrural-pc.co.uk

Address:- Tring Rural Parish Council, PO Box 6444, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 6FX

***The Villages Warden is*:**
Mr Colin Reedman 01442 822031

Parish Council Website:

http://www.tringrural-pc.co.uk/

The 2019-20 year end reserves are budgeted to be £41,422 and fall into four categories:

Allocated Reserves - £11,044
earmarked or ring-fenced for specific activities e.g. Replacement of key playground equipment, flooding, 2023 election accrual

Unallocated Reserves: £8,066
to cover projects yet to be identified.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): £8,826
(now £14,138 at time of writing) arising from new property developments and aimed at supporting infrastructure related projects.

General Reserve: £13,486
which roughly equates to half the value of the precept (as advised by HAPTC) to cover unforeseen/urgent requirements that may surface during the year.

LONG MARSTON VICTORY HALL

LARGE HALL WITH STAGE and LIGHTING RIG AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

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Letters to the editor ...

From Phil and Maggie Buchi,
Milford on Sea, Hampshire.

Seaside postcard

WE would like to thank our friends and neighbours in the villages for all their good wishes on our recent move to Milford on Sea. It was great to receive your messages of support. Though it was a while coming, on the day our move went like clockwork. The removers had unloaded by 5pm and drove off leaving us to our mountain of cardboard boxes. (The mountain has now subsided a little.) We had a great time in the 20 years we lived in Wilstone and Long Marston - it was a terrific period of our lives. We have moved to another very active community with many opportunities to take part. Though it will not be the same, we are looking forward to that too. *Best wishes from Phil and Maggie.*

From Jane Banister, All Saints Church, Long Marston

Potential housing development in Long Marston

THE field just beyond All Saints Church is glebe land, which means that the Diocese of St Albans owns it. The diocese is one of the geographical areas that comprise the Church of England, and that is the body that has dealt with the management of the land. This means that it not the local church that makes decisions about what happens to it, nor does the local church receive any money from it.
The Diocese has decided to sell the land to a local developer, Laxton Developments, on a three year option, with a plan to build 10 homes there. Laxtons are very keen to have a conversation with the local community, so this will be advertised once a date has been agreed.

As representatives of a local church, we are aware that more housing is needed, and that small, sympathetic developments seem the best option. We are happy to talk to people about this, but do not know a great deal more than is written here.

From Paul Weston, Long Marston

In praise of Wednesday at One

WITH two successful events held so far, 'Wednesday at One' has quickly established itself as a popular addition to the Long Marston social scene. This drop in event seems to offer something for everyone, from a parents and toddlers corner, to crafting tables (for children and adults alike), board games, an after school game of table tennis or just simple conversation over a cup of tea and the newspaper and of course not forgetting catching up on local news and information. Thanks go to Kim Fox for her vision in organising these events and her band of helpers and cake makers; the attendance levels are already proving that there is a real need for this type of daytime social hub in the village.

The Village News team would like to extend our appreciation to Long Marston's "Wednesday at One" function held on 13th February 2019 at Long Marston's Victory Hall.

A raffle was arranged at this excellent monthly social event for local residents, with the £32 proceeds of the raffle being generously donated to the Village News by Kim Fox and her hard working team.

Very many thanks to all those participating in the raffle.

The Village News team

Wendover Arm Trust: new year's update

by Nigel Williams

GOOD progress continues with the restoration despite some inclement weather over the winter. We have been pleased to welcome a number of new volunteers to our restoration team and progress is accelerating but are now in need of some assistance on the administrative side:

1. **Membership Secretary**. A wide ranging job recruiting new members and retention of existing, operating the Club 100 lottery scheme, promoting Trust events, recording GiftAid payments, dealing with any enquiries etc. Further details can be given.

2. **Newsletter Editor**. Our quarterly colour magazine gives members information on restoration progress, events and articles of general waterways interest. Some advertisements are incorporated and we should like to increase this income revenue. Guidance will be provided.

Both positions can be home based and preferably in the local area.

If you are able to help us with either of these positions please contact
the Chairman, Chris Sargeant, tel: 01494 775845, at *"Chairman@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk"* or
David Page, *newsletter@wendoverarmtrust.co.uk"*
Tel: 01494 863176 in respect of the latter position.

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Long Marston CC - Pre-Season Update

by Matt Storey

AS winter draws to a close and the temperatures rise a little, cricket season is just around the corner at Long Marston CC. After plenty of changes at board level last winter, the new hierarchy have been getting their teeth stuck into matters this year as the club continues to look for ways to improve. Now everyone is looking forward to action on the pitch starting up, with our first XI in Cherwell League Division 1, our second in Division 4 and our third in Division 9.

Our friendly fixtures commence on April 13th, before the league campaign begins a month later, and winter training has already begun to take place every Sunday morning between 10am and 12pm at Chesham Prep school. Anyone interested in playing, whether you're played all your life or never picked up a cricket bat, is welcome. We have three teams playing every Saturday and one on Sundays so you should always get a game. And if you do not fancy running around every weekend, the bar is always open, well stocked and visitors are welcome.

Before the games start, we host our annual quiz night at Marlins on Friday March 22. Proceedings will start at 7.45pm, with a two-course hot dinner included in the £10 ticket and teams of up to eight allowed. Anyone interested in attending should email Martin Keable on martinjkeable@gmail.com for more details. Leighton Fun Runners will also hold their annual 10k at LMCC on March 31st, which is open to anyone.

Over the course of the season we have plenty of events planned at Marlins, including BBQs, a cheese & wine night and a music night, so keep an eye out for those events if they tickle your fancy and get involved in your local cricket club.

Finally due to a late restructure of leagues we are in desperate need of umpires and scorers for the season ahead. If you have experience in either, want to take them up, or know somebody who might, please do get in touch with our chairman, Chris Bowles, on chair@longmarstoncc.co.uk.

Follow Long Marston Cricket Club at www.longmarstoncc.co.uk

No 127 solution

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9	1	8	7	6	2	5	3	4
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Dear Parishioners,

IF you ask the average person in the street "what does a Parish Council do?" chances are a scene from the Vicar of Dibley will come to mind. Granted, Parish Council meetings can be good entertainment at times but they have a serious role to play within a local community. They comprise local non-paid residents who feel passionate about their community and wish to influence the direction it is taking for the benefit of its parishioners.

The key word here is 'influence'. In reality, the Parish Council has little power to make big changes - which I will come back to in a moment.

The Parish Council has an annual budget, much of which is taken up with a host of routine tasks such as grass cutting and maintenance of its open spaces and such like - all of these are essential. However, we are fortunate enough to have built up our reserves to fund projects of our choosing. This calls for creativity on the part of parish councillors to find solutions that will support the need of a growing community and make it an increasingly desirable place to live - a nice and exciting challenge to have.

Despite all this, much of what we seek to improve in areas that greatly affect our quality of life - whether it's housing, traffic, drainage or road surfaces, has to be done with the cooperation of the relevant lead authorities - i.e. Herts CC, Dacorum BC, Environment Agency, Thames Water and others. The Parish Council has neither the authority nor the funds to remedy these issues alone, but it does have a Voice.

This brings me back to the word 'influence'. So how does a small parish like ours influence the 'powers that be' - all of whom are under financial constraints and having demands placed upon them from large conurbations? It comes down to relationships, commitment, tenacity and the willingness to make a contribution to the cause.

That is why this council has created working parties comprising councillors and committed residents to provide a focus on resolving some of the key issues facing the parish. The working parties interface with the lead authorities and act as their 'feet on the ground' providing the necessary information, support and regular contact that ultimately influences the decision makers. It is not a quick process, but getting our fair share of their attention and sustained support was never going to be.

Whether you like what your Parish Council is doing and would wish to build on the momentum it has achieved to date or you are dissatisfied and critical of its performance, **now is <u>your</u> chance to get involved!**

The Parish Council elections are in May, so I urge all of you who have a keen interest in how the council can make a difference to your parish and are willing to commit some of your time, to put yourselves forward for election. Nomination papers will be available in March.

I believe a parish gets the council it deserves - we owe it to ourselves to make Tring Rural the best.

Yours,

Malcolm Morgan - Chair, Tring Rural Parish Council

TRPC Flood Working Party Update

Cllr Peter Myrants, Chairman FWP

Flooding Community Open Day Event

AN extremely well received and supported turn out to the Flooding Community Open Day event on Wednesday 30th January 2019.

The inclement weather didn't put off around a hundred or so residents who turned out between 5pm and 9 pm. There was a comprehensive display of maps and information sheets for people to peruse and it presented a great opportunity for residents to ask their questions of the various authorities and gain a better understanding of all matters flooding.

On hand were 5 members of Herts County Council (HCC), 2 members of Thames Water, 2 from the Environment Agency, the Chairman plus wardens of the Herts & Middx Butterfly Conservation Group who manage the Millhoppers Butterfly reserve as well as 5 members of the Flood Working Party (FWP).

Regrettably we were all so pre-occupied, we forgot to take any photos of the event.

I would like to record my thanks to the authorities, Flood Working Party members and all the residents who attended and made this a successful event. HCC commented that this was the best attended event that they have been part of to date.

This is a great example of how a Parish Council with a focused working party can bring together and influence the lead authorities to apply their resources in jointly addressing a major issue in the Parish; albeit that the timescales to achieve them are at a much slower pace than we would ideally like.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) Update

The NFM options were on display at the above event and here was much discussion around them with feedback from residents captured by HCC.

The next step is for further modelling and detailed design of the option to divert water away from Long Marston at Gubblecote Cross and to understand the implications of its diversion.

Also the investigation on the Recreation Ground will be progressed to the groundwater testing stage to better understand infiltration (see further details below).

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Investigation

An approach that is being explored is a Sustainable Drainage System proposal in the Long Marston recreation ground. This will investigate the different types of water run-off management measures to reduce flood risk. i.e. intercepting overland flow by obstructing overland flow paths and physically slowing the rate at which water is delivered to rivers, temporary storage of floodwater, disconnection and lengthening of flow pathways or increasing travel time.

The scheme would aim to provide infiltration / surface water storage areas and include the clearance of field ditches as a run-off for the flows from the surrounding fields, to manage rainfall in a way similar to natural processes, by using the landscape to control the flow and volume of surface water.

At this stage, HCC are undertaking some exploratory infiltration testing to assess the infiltration and storage potential of the recreational ground. This will be conducted with minimal disruption, mindful of the users of the recreational ground.

Chapel Lane – Long Marston

Following on from the flooding in May 2018, a second S19 Flood Investigation was conducted by HCC, which can be located on the HCC website – https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/water/flood-investigations.aspx#

The report highlights the ongoing investigations that are being conducted in Long Marston with the redundant sewer and is being surveyed by HCC to assess both its contribution and potential alleviation of flooding.

Thames Water

A follow on update meeting with Thames Water and HCC is scheduled for later this month.

Tring Bourne

Having met up with Mr Gregory following his article in the Village News last month, the FWP had a productive discussion and walked along the Tring Bourne to explore and better understand the issue he raised regarding the collapsed culvert / bridge.

I have now reported this to the Environment Agency who is responsible for main rivers, such as the Tring Bourne – incident # 1680867.

HCC has offered to meet with Mr Gregory to gain the benefit of his local knowledge and to explain the approach being taken based upon their extensive flood simulations and studies.

We share a common goal in alleviating the flooding issues and we look forward to Mr Gregory's support and valuable assistance in future.

WE received a further article regarding the brook along Chapel Lane, amongst other issues, from Ivor Gregory, which he has subsequently withdrawn from publication in the Village News, and include this letter instead:

Flooding in Long Marston

By Liz Young, Long Marston

WHAT an extremely interesting and informative article Ivor Gregory wrote on the causes of flooding in Long Marston. 'The drinking hole' (cattle pond) he refers to is at the end of our garden and the level of the water has slowly risen in the 11 years we have lived here. We also have a drainage ditch running the length of the garden, adjacent to The Braid, ending in the pond, and this is now filled with water all the year round which was never previously the case.

I do hope the Parish Council will take some action on the remedial work to lower the water levels suggested by Ivor Gregory. Clearing the ditches and streams, which have been left in appalling condition by the local land owners (I don't understand why the Authorities haven't insisted they fulfil their existing responsibilities in this – it would go a long way to solving the flooding problem) and mending the broken culvert should not be too difficult or expensive. After all, our neighbours did a magnificent job clearing the pond last autumn – so it can be done.

Highways Working Party – final update

Nigel Fox (on behalf of the Highways Working Party)

AFTER fourteen months of data gathering the Highways Working Party has produced its report entitled, 'Promoting the safety and wellbeing of residents through effective highway and traffic management' and as noted below, we are grateful to residents for their support in this enterprise. This report will be presented to Councillors of Tring Rural Parish for endorsement at the next Council meeting on Wednesday, 6th March. Thereafter, copies will be sent to Dacorum Borough Council and Herts County Council with the expectation of responses in a reasonable time-frame.

Essentially the report identifies locations within the Parish where working party members felt traffic concerns to be most acute and makes provisional recommendations to ameliorate these concerns. That our recommendations are 'provisional' reflects the fact that members of the working party are simply concerned residents and not highway engineers with appropriate technical expertise. Despite this obvious limitation we do believe that the 'locations' identified are accurate and recommended solutions both sensible and relatively inexpensive. Certainly, they are based on a wealth of surveys, resident feedback, interviews and research.

Whilst researching and writing this report has taken time and commitment on behalf of the Working Party, the real challenge remains ahead of us. Although we are not anticipating outright rejection of our proposals, experience tells us that persuading local authorities of the merits of our case and then procuring funding is notoriously difficult. Keeping up the pressure over the next year or so will, almost certainly, be necessary if we are to gain the type of improvements we seek.

One important element in this battle will be securing the support of residents and to this end from the 11th-18th March we will be placing our report on Facebook*, with hard copies available in local pubs and Wilstone Shop, providing you with an opportunity to respond to the report's conclusions. We ask that in doing this you consider the report in its entirety and avoid becoming too immersed in specific recommendations for locations not least because, as acknowledged earlier, we expect these to be modified when considered by those with greater technical knowledge and understanding of traffic management. We trust that a high percentage will endorse our broad findings and your comments will be collated and presented to the Parish Council at either the April or May meeting. Clearly, if you feel we have incorrectly identified the locations of most acute concern then feel free to tell us.

Finally, on behalf of the Working Party let me express our gratitude to the numerous residents who provided words of encouragement and/or supplied photos, details of near misses/ accidents, instances of 'road rage' etc; these were all extremely helpful. Let me also thank County Councillor Nick Hollinghurst who funded the S&V survey from his budget; this provided invaluable data. Last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to all members of the Working Party for their hard work and determination to see this project through to a conclusion.

*Tring Rural Parish Council, Everything Long Marston, Everything Wilstone, Long Marston School Parents, Long Marston Pre-school

Getting support from public bodies to deal with our local issues is not easy.

Panto photo by John Kaye

Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 127 Moderate

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Solution on page 15

A new lease of life for Millhoppers Nature Reserve

By Paula Reid

IN July 2017, four new wardens - Chris Hilling, Peter Melitus, Paula Reid and Christine Ridley, took over the management of Millhoppers Nature reserve. Four may seem a little excessive, but in fact has proved very successful, as we have all have different strengths and expertise, and we have had great fun working as a team.

We have held monthly work parties since our first session in August 2017, and with the help of some keen volunteers, have been busy managing the site so that its butterflies and other wildlife can flourish. Our main aims have been to prevent the scrub of Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Brambles etc, from taking over the pasture, and to reduce the fertility of the soil so that wild flowers and fine grasses can flourish, and the course grasses and tall vegetation and nettles are kept in check. This has meant a lot of chopping, lopping and tree-popping of the woody shrubs, and mowing and raking of the grass.

This winter the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust very kindly lent us nine Herdwick sheep during the months of November and December, so that their munching could further weaken the course vegetation. It was necessary to strengthen, and in some places renew the perimeter fence before their arrival, and as this was a really big job, we were fortunate to have volunteers from the Osborne Property group as well as our regulars to help us with the task. Chris Hilling, who is an excellent carpenter, completed the project by making a sturdy gate to separate the top meadow from the triangle of woodland at the north of the reserve, as this area is not fenced.

One aspect of the reserve which has concerned us greatly, is the lack of water in the stream flowing across the site, and we have made extensive enquiries about why this should be. Several experts led by the Herts County Council Flood Risk Management Officer, have visited the reserve, and promised to try to resolve the situation. Although no work has been started yet, we were delighted when the water began to flow in December 2017, after the stream bed had been dry for three years. The water dried up during the hot dry weather last summer but has again been flowing in the reserve since the beginning of December this winter.

A butterfly transect has been walked every week during the spring, summer and early autumn months since the new wardens took over, and so far, 19 butterfly species have been recorded on the site. We were pleased to see that the summer of 2018 saw an increase in butterfly numbers, especially Common Blues and Small Coppers, and a few Brown Argus butterflies were spotted for the first time on the reserve. All the transect results have been entered on Butterfly Conservation's website, and also sent to Andrew Wood who co-ordinates all the transect results for Hertfordshire.

We also are keen to monitor the moths on the reserve, but this has not yet been possible due to lack of equipment. However, Paula Shipway completed an in-depth survey of the many lichens on the reserve in September 2018 and managed to find 48 species altogether.

We are still looking for more volunteers to join our team, so if you would like a free gym in the fresh air in good company, why not come along for a session to see if you enjoy it?

Herts and Middx Branch of Butterfly Conservation bought Millhoppers, with a grant from Decorum, in 1998. It was the first and only reserve for the Branch, with the aim of conserving the wildlife and particularly butterflies in the area. Since then a monthly recording of Butterflies has been made from April to September every year so we have a 20 year record of the distribution and the number of butterflies on Millhoppers and other wildlife in addition. John Noakes was warden on the reserve for the first 12 years and, for a short period the reserve was managed only minimally until we were able to welcome new wardens.

If you are interested, please contact: Paula Reid at: reidpaulaj@yahoo.co.uk

Margaret Noakes.

Bringing back bees and butterflies

by Sara Wickenden

THE winter months are when our work at the allotment consists mostly of clearing and preparing the beds and cages. And as we approach early spring the delightful task of planting seeds beckons; as does waiting impatiently for those tiny green shoots to stick their heads above the soil. It's a great time for contemplating how to best manage the allotment this year.

Having been interested in ecology and conservation for many years I have a soft spot for many of our pollinators from butterflies to hoverflies to bees. They do such an amazing job and are key to productive farms, gardens and allotments.

So the reports of a steep worldwide decline in vitally important pollinators such as bees over the years are alarming. There are several factors contributing to these decreasing populations. For instance, the varroa mite is a parasite that weakens honeybees and helps to spread a virus that deforms their wings.

While researchers are busy investigating ways of combating this particular threat to honeybees there are other hazards faced by our pollinators. Most notable is a particular type of pesticide known as neonicotinoids, these are widely used in industrial agriculture especially in the USA, Australia, Canada and China. While not intended to kill pollinators, neonicotinoids can reduce egg-laying by bee queens, and disrupt the colony's ability to collect pollen. These pesticides are absorbed throughout the entire plant and are found in seeds, nectar and pollen. The chemicals remain active in the soil around the plants for months, affecting new crops. There has been great concern about allowing these pesticides in the UK and their use is currently restricted here.

So given this, we are planning to experiment with companion planting that will deter pests but help the bees; borage with our tomatoes and strawberries, rosemary for our beans and carrots and lavender around our fruit trees. I am not sure how successful we'll be but we intend to give it our best shot.

Another issue is loss of habitats and biodiversity, which can be caused by industrial and residential developments and widespread monoculture affecting and reducing natural habitats. The creation of a wildflower meadow behind the farm shop has been great to see. And on a

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smaller scale, individuals such as allotment-holders can also help to redress the balance. A typical allotment and even a garden can allow for a more varied habitat which can improve biodiversity. Growing a range of plants from vegetables and fruit to decorative flowers that will attract pollinators over a long period of time is ideal.

Between our allotment and our garden, we are intent on maximising the availability of flowering plants to attract pollinators. The beautiful blossom seen on fruit trees is one of the early offerings to pollinators while late-flowering Jerusalem artichokes are covered with insects in their autumnal flowers.

In addition, we are planning a few mini habitats that critters such as the bumble bees will appreciate. And it doesn't have to be expensive. Hollow stems such as those from Jerusalem Artichokes, left in place, can provide suitable accommodation for many pollinating insects, especially overwinter. Meanwhile a shelter for hedgehogs will encourage these wonderful creatures who will happily much on the pests that can plague allotment holders such as slugs.

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In case you haven't noticed what's going on in the red telephone box in Station Road…

by Gill Macdonald

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But I'm not 'hangin on the telephone'
I'm not making a call at all
I'm reading books
Real ones
Made of paper
For the phone box
Is full of them
Come take a look!

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It's a Bard Aid Box
A tiny haven
For people who like books
Poetry
Ideas
People who are curious
Even crooks
Because you can steal them
Take them away
You don't have to pay

And you don't have to sign up
Reveal your mobile number
Or email address
The size of your chest
This is the literary equivalent
Of free love
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And return
Any time you want to
This week, next week, tomorrow
Perhaps even never
If you love one that much

You can use them
Appropriate their words
Their meanings
Caress their pages
Smooth their rigid spines
It's stimulation for the mind
A place,
In this world of rampant
Commercialism and exploitation
Absolutely without strings
Or obligation

It's a dream station
A tiny red Tardis
Of the imagination
A place of surprises
And unconditional
Possibilities
All wonderfully
And totally
Free
A place for you
And a place for me

So come and join me
Hanging in the phone box
And take a look
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Take a book
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An extremely good
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Oh, and the books
The books…

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Digging for Victory A Story of Longub Puttastone

by Martin Winship

THE allotments at Longub Puttastone had been created decades ago, when the nation was up against it, fighting almost alone against the Nazis, facing a U-boat blockade, desperately short of food, and having no choice but to "Dig for Victory". Allotments had sprung up all over the country in all sorts of locations; on sections of town parks, in the grounds of manor houses and schools, even on railway embankments and by the towpaths of canals. In the case of Longub Puttastone, the site had been a spare acre of land which had always been referred to as "Julian's Patch"; no one knew why, not even Old Siegfried. Of course, at the time, the creation of all these allotments had been described as a temporary measure, only intended for the duration, until victory was won. And of course, when that victory was eventually secured, after years of blood, sweat and tears, the holders of the allotments were disinclined to let them go; so they didn't. In fact, the "allotment movement" went from strength to strength, and more land was set aside for the use of home-growers.

But times and customs change. The years passed. Food was no longer rationed or limited. Produce which had once been seasonal became available all year round, from the shelves of new-fangled supermarkets at prices which no home-grower could hope to match, at least, not if they included the time spent on their plot. Nevertheless, price was not everything. Many people gained great pleasure and satisfaction from the knowledge that they had produced the food on their table by their own hard work and application. And everyone agreed that "tending your own patch" was very healthy outdoor exercise.

Now however, allotments were going through one of their occasional nadirs, and several in Longub Puttastone were unused and neglected. Almost a third of the land was abandoned, and only broken equipment and rubbish was stored there. All the same, there was consternation, alarm and indignation when it was disclosed that a planning application had been made to turn this area into a Gated Development of Executive Homes, and that the parish council were favourably inclined. The Gang of Four met in Siegfried's cottage to discuss resistance and counter measures. Thomas had brought a supply of his cider along; past experience had shown it to be a great aid to thoughtful contemplation.

"What about a plague pit?" Rodney suggested, after the first generous libation.

Siegfried shook his head. "Never any plague round here; too blooming healthy.

Jake rubbed his chin. "What about a rare flower? We could "discover" something in the middle of the site – an orchid say. One of them Lady's Knickers."

"Lady's Slippers you mean," Siegfried replied. "No. It's out of the question. One whiff of an unusual plant and they'll slap an ASBO on the allotments – all of them. And where would I be then?"

"Er, ASBO? What…." The other three were looking bemused.

"Yes; ASBO. You know – Area of Special Botanical Opening, I think," explained Siegfried.

"How about an unexploded bomb?" said Thomas, "I've heard about how those Junkets and Heinekens used to dump them on their way back to Germany. Dropped them anywhere, they did."

"Yeh," Rodney interrupted, "and I've still got some of my fishing hand grenades left."

"We don't want to kill anyone!" said Siegfried. The others were surprised at this demonstration of consideration. "Anyway, I've got a plan. It's fool-proof, of course."

A few weeks previously, Old Siegfried had taken one of Plumber's Coaches day trips to St. Albrans, and had visited the Roman villa in the park. He hadn't troubled reading any of the information boards or leaflets, but he had looked at the pictures and at the fantastic mosaic floor itself, and he felt confident that he knew how it was done. Besides, he had seen it demonstrated on Blue Peter, by Christopher Trace. (He still had a Blue Peter badge; he'd made it himself.)

Now Siegfried gathered his materials and equipment; old plates and other crockery, plaster, pliers and so on. He remembered that at the beginning of the war, a pillbox had been built on the edge of Julian's Patch (for no obvious strategic reason) and its concrete base was still there. He would use it as his "canvas", and he set to work. He worked up a wonderful design of roman gods, with nymphs, and dolphins, and unicorns, and in the bottom corner, a roman soldier (Siegfried's favourite). He really let his imagination go, and put all his flair and creative talent into what he modestly considered to be a masterpiece. When he had finished his work, he carefully covered it over with soil, and waited with keen anticipation for the results.

The archaeologists turned up to survey the site with little real enthusiasm. They knew very well that the chances of finding anything more interesting than some old animal bones or broken cod bottles were remote. Their astonishment can be imagined then, when the first digger-full of soil revealed the colourful gleam of an unsuspected mosaic floor. The dig proceeded apace, but carefully, and by hand, and the atmosphere of discovery and excitement became palpable and contagious. It was still apparent at the subsequent public meeting which was held in the village hall when the archaeological dig had been concluded and the report was ready. It seemed that most of the villagers were interested enough to turn up – and Old Siegfried who had arrived good and early, sat at the front, with a smug look on his face.

The head archaeologist stood up and addressed the crowd. "You will no doubt have heard by now of the incredible mosaic we have uncovered on the spare land at the allotments," she began. "And I use the term *incredible* advisedly."

"Does that mean the development's off then?" someone shouted from the back of the hall.

The archaeologist shook her head. "Well, no," she said.

Siegfried jumped up. "Eh? Well why blooming not?" he demanded.

"The fact is," the archaeologist replied, "the mosaic is beyond question a fake!"

A buzz of astonishment went round the hall.

"Yes. You see, there were several clues, quite obvious to the trained expert eye. For instance, the colour and material of the tesserae – the little pottery tiles – were completely wrong. And then, the plaster was clearly of modern manufacture." The archaeologist paused, and held up a learned finger. "But the clincher for us was the roman soldier."

Siegfried frowned. He had been particularly proud of the soldier. "What was wrong with him?" he demanded.

The archaeologist looked straight at Siegfried, one eyebrow slightly raised. "He was riding a bicycle" she told him.

Community Shop Wilstone opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:30am to 2:00pm
Saturday 7:30am to 1:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am to 12:00 noon.

Obituary - Amelia Roberts 1997 - 2018

by Hamish and Debbie Roberts

AMELIA was born 3rd July 1997. She was the middle sister to Lily and Kitty.

We moved to Broadmead Farm, Long Marston, from Marsworth, when she was 2 so she went to the toddler group and then First Steps Preschool. From there she attended the village school and despite moving onto other schools she considered herself a local girl!

She had an extremely fertile imagination as a young child. We would often pick her up from school to be greeted by sympathetic teachers consoling us for the awful weekend we had just experienced… to hear that the house had burnt down or Debbie had had all her teeth removed!

At senior school she loved drama, choral music and lacrosse. She had a passion for singing and had such a beautiful voice. She went on to captain both her School and University teams in Lacrosse. She also achieved her gold Duke of Edinburgh award.

In her gap year she took herself to the jungles of Borneo with Raleigh International where she helped erect solar panels for a village and build a suspension bridge across a ravine. She was really proud that she didn't have a bath for three months!

Amelia managed to secure a place to study Criminology at Portsmouth University where she was in her final year. When she came home in the summer holidays she could be found working at the Grove Farm Pick Your Own in Ivinghoe.

At sixteen she was diagnosed with "petit mal" epilepsy (or absences) . She was determined to lead a normal life, but the drugs she was prescribed had powerful side effects and made this difficult. She was so dignified and wouldn't complain. We think everyone was struck by the openness and honesty they encountered when she talked about her "dodgy bonce". Last year she started having "grand mal" fits which rendered her unconscious. Unfortunately none of the drugs she took could stop either form of fit.

Throughout her life Amelia was the kindest, funniest, thoughtful, mischievous, gentle, beautiful, selfless girl. She was full of vim and vigour. She was determined, feared little and of whom we were immensely proud. She was greatly loved by many and clearly had an effect on anyone she met.

She died suddenly at home on December the 20th 2018. We are thankful that she didn't suffer and was with her family. She is now buried in the village church yard. Her memorial service in Tring was attended by over 550 people.

Amelia left her brain to the Epilepsy Society for research and she will be very proud to know that through this selfless act others might not have to suffer. We have set up a Justgiving page to help fund Genome research and help others like her. For those of you who are interested go to Justgiving.com and search for "debbieroberts21".

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Wilstone Community Shop

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We aim to serve the Community by:

- Keeping prices fair
- Offering a wide range of goods and services
- Stocking home-made and local produce
- Being a place where people like to shop and volunteers like to work

And so the fundraising begins...

You may have noticed that the size of the donation jar for the shop has grown considerably! We have already raised £30 via your generous donation of change, but of course there is far more to come. Here is an update on where we are so far:

The inaugural meeting of the Wilstone Community Shop Development Programme (WCSDP) committee was held on 30 January. The role of the committee, as indicated at the January public meeting is to explore the options of purchasing the existing property (i.e. the shop, the second retail unit plus the flat above) and possible other properties or locations, to ensure that there is a shop that continues to serve the village and its visitors when the current premises are sold in 2021. Its remit does not include looking at how the new shop will be designed and run, that remains with the shop management committee.

After initial wide-ranging discussions, the meeting felt that as a first step we should look at how other villages have gone about developing their shops, so meetings have been arranged with the Wigginton and Houghton and Wyton shops. In addition, we have obtained the business plans of these shops and a further one from Kilsby's community shop in Northamptonshire. These will all be examined in detail and the results will be discussed at the next WCSDP meeting on 18 February.

Large jar for a large target!

As residents will have gleaned from the public meeting, this is potentially an extremely complex and emotive subject because the shop is so much more than just a shop – it's the hub and heart of the village, an asset that residents rely on not just for their newspapers and nappy wipes, and visiting workmen for hot drinks and bacon rolls - it's where many villagers go for a chat, and catch-up on village news.

Accordingly, we will ensure that everybody is kept informed of progress through regular updates in the newsletter and e-mails to those who have expressed an interest in developments (you can register at any time in the shop).

The committee comprises Doug Chalmers (Chair), Nici Ward, Kathryn England, James Brown, Rachel Cobb and Chris Owen. The members have wide-ranging experience in many areas in the public and private sectors, including fund-raising, retail, finance, construction, facilities management and development, and publishing and marketing. But we fully anticipate that we will be drawing on expertise from other residents, including members of the existing shop management committee, of course, to help guide the committee through this complicated and potentially arduous process to get the shop the village wants and deserves.

We would welcome your comments on the work of the committee. Simply enter your email address on the form in the shop and you can respond to the updates as you receive them. If you don't have email, you can leave comments in the suggestions box in the shop. We look forward to hearing from you.

Promotional feature sponsored by Wilstone Community Shop

Newsflash: Please look out for the shop development survey that will be delivered to all households in Wilstone and the neighbouring villages in the parish in early April.

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Why Wilstone ?? byAlison Cockerill

I HAVE never attempted to count the number of times I have been asked 'you live in Tring - why do you spend so much time in Wilstone, why do you attend St. Cross church, why do you make marmalade for Wilstone shop and no-one else?' I will try to explain. I don't do large - I prefer villages to towns, towns to cities. I love anything rural - countryside, farming, walking, canals, open spaces, wide views. The parish has it all, but alongside, I also have family connections to Wilstone.

My great grandparents Joe and Orpah Edwards lived in the village all their married lives, latterly in the house Joe and his son Arthur built, at 66 Tring Road. My maternal grandmother was born there and lived in Wilstone until she married and moved to Tring. Arthur and Florrie Edwards, at 86 Tring Road, were my aunt and uncle, and my Mum Pam Cockerill spent a lot of time in the village as a child. Her memories of that time were recorded in a previous edition of Village News. Suffice to say she loved Wilstone. As a child I frequently came to the village with my grandmother when she visited her father Joe, and in my teenage years I learnt to ride at Cynthia Burnham's stables. In 1966 my Mum joined the staff of Wilstone School as a 'helper' and worked there until the school closed in 1971.

My grandmother had been a member of Wilstone church when she lived in the village but the contact lapsed when she moved to Tring. In the late 1970's my parents started to attend St. Cross on a regular basis and soon joined forces with the congregation to initiate a massive fund-raising programme to refurbish the church. Everyone has different skills and abilities and my Mum and Dad's strength was organisation - boy, could they organise! With the enthusiastic help of a group of 10 other churchgoers The Friends of St. Cross ran charity stalls at Tring Market, attended car boot sales, hosted lunches in the village hall, coffee evenings around the parish, launched the jam-jar scheme (still going strong today) and the occasional jumble sale. The biggest event of them all was in 1991, a Festival of Travel, with 'modes of transport' parading through the village to the recreation ground - ponies and traps, heavy horses with farm wagons, penny farthing bicycles through to the latest Harley Davison motor bike, every commercial vehicle you can imagine, and untold numbers of vintage cars. It took a year to organise and to this day I don't know how they did it. We have a video recording of the event, sadly not up to today's standards of production, but still a wonderful record of the day. All this fundraising resulted in St. Cross getting new windows, a new floor and heating system, and the installation of mains water when the porch extension was built in 2000. There then followed Flower and Craft Festivals but that is another story.

Where was I in all this? Helping as much as I could, doing what I was told, and gradually becoming more and more involved with Wilstone. And so I continue, as a full member of the church, and a church which now needs more work done to take it forward for the next 50 years. The Friends of St. Cross was formed in 1983 to help maintain the church building and further its use within the community. When the porch extension was built in 2000 a new decking entrance was also constructed, but this now needs replacing. A plan has been drawn up by the Tring Team Parish surveyor, based on the requests of St. Cross District Church Council (DCC), and guided by church warden Ken Martin. We had three requirements; the new entrance must have a very long life, be the best quality for the least money!, and it must provide easy access for all abilities. The plan has been approved by the DCC and christened Access for All (AfA), so now the hard work begins.

The whole process will take time; planning permission has to come from the Diocese as well as Dacorum etc, but our main focus is once more on fundraising. This will be a big challenge. In 1931 Rev'd Anthony was appointed to the living of All Saints in Long Marston and St. Cross in Wilstone. After 12 months he declared he was not paid enough to run two churches, nor did he have the time for both. So in 1932 he closed Wilstone church, holding occasional services but allowing the church to fall into disrepair. A newspaper report from the late 1950's describes a church with brambles growing through the broken windows, a barricaded front door, and an abandoned churchyard. Inside, cobwebs hung like black net curtains from the roof beams. Rev'd Anthony retired in 1961. It was Rev'd Hugh Warwick, appointed to the living in 1962, who undertook to restore St. Cross, initially on his own but very quickly joined by the village. The windows were repaired, a new organ and loft installed, and a heating boiler donated. The chairs, which had all rotted, were replaced by pews. Hugh Warwick worked tirelessly for the church and the village but sadly died in 1970, at the age of only 47.

How was Rev'd Anthony allowed to 'abandon' St. Cross? Mainly because the parishes then were very small and independent of each other, and a long way from the reach of the Bishop in St. Albans. Today, St. Cross is not alone; the church is part of the Tring Team Parish and has the support of a full clergy team, many voluntary ministers and access to a wide range of resources, which is not possible for stand-alone churches. The horse chestnut tree, which was sadly condemned and felled last year, was paid for out of Team funds, the recent repairs to the heating system were also paid for by the Team. So as well as funding the AfA project, St. Cross are also striving to increase their support for the Team. A big ask - we have done it before, can we do it again? Well, we have made a start. There is a programme of fund-raising events planned for this year, starting in April with a flower arranging evening with Neil Gurney (see separate ad. on page 7).

So, now you know. My Mum and I continue to support Wilstone as much as we are able, not just the church but everything that makes up village life. Like everyone else we will follow the progress of the Community shop as the committee strive to secure its future and will do what we can to help. We will continue to make purchases from Meads Farm Shop as we have for many years, and look forward to the arrival of lambs in the fields in spring, and I will continue to answer the question 'Why Wilstone'!

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The second in a series of features about local sports clubs **by Alan Warner**

A cricket club on the edge

Blending Youth and Experience

LIKE all sports clubs, Long Marston CC has its own kind of banter and its own amusing stories, some true, some apocryphal. The story mentioned last month of the wife who dragged her husband from the pitch to go to a Saturday night party is one of the true ones, according to my interviewees Chris Bowles and Lee Beesley, though no names were mentioned. Also, as with most sports teams, there have been many pranks in the club's long history; part of the club folklore is the story from way back of the player whose clothes were taken from his locker at an away fixture, causing his naked presence to frighten the tea ladies while he searched for them (the clothes that is!) in the pavilion. Nothing like that these days of course.

But, pranks aside, it was made clear to me that the cricket at LMCC is taken very seriously, particularly in the first and second eleven Saturday matches, all one day games of 100 overs and two innings. 'Highly competitive' was the term used by Chris and it reminded me of my days in years gone by when I was in the Tring 3rd eleven and players (often me!) were shunned if they misfielded or dropped a catch. But I was assured that, though there may be some angst on the field, all is forgotten in the bar afterwards. The friendlies on Sunday and the shorter Wednesday evening games are more relaxed and enable those that prefer social cricket to participate.

The history of the club during the last 40 years shows impressive development. Prior to 1980, the club only played friendly games and the team was well known for its excellent batting wicket and high quality team. The results were usually comprehensive victories for LMCC, maybe (I wondered) because the opposition teams were chosen carefully. Then the ethos of the club was built around the social activities, rather than the development of the team.

This changed with the entry into the Cherwell league in the mid 1980s and by the 1990s the team was in Division 2 (out of 9). There was however a decline in the latter half of that decade as the players got older and there were insufficient young players coming through. As mentioned last month, sons succeeding fathers were the main source of new talent and, brilliant though these sons have been (mention no names!) this route inevitably had its limitations. The result was that the club sank back into Division 4. But around the middle of the first decade of the new century, there were some significant changes that completely changed the culture and atmosphere in the club.

One change was the recruitment in 2006 of a player whose mindset and quality of play was beyond anything the club had seen before. His name was Mike Lyons, he had played high level club cricket in Sussex and came to live in Wingrave. He was soon made club captain and set an example to the young players coming through. It was not just the runs he made but the aggressive approach to batting; he soon became known as 'Pinchy' because he was the equivalent to the Pinch Hitter in baseball, the older, experienced player who hits the ball so far that there is no need to run. Mike is still pinch hitting for LMCC and continues to set the right example.

The second change was the appointment of a new coach, Paul Atkins, in 2013. Paul had previously played first class cricket for Surrey, coached at all levels and captained Buckinghamshire for many years. He introduced a new level of organization of coaching, with the focus on developing new young players. Previously there had been a Wednesday night session for youngsters but there had not been enough structure and purpose.

This has all changed in the five years since Paul became coach. Links with local schools have been developed so that promising players can be encouraged to join the junior under 13 team, first introduced in 2014. There is now one to one coaching and a buddy system that involves a promising youngster being mentored by a senior player. Already a number of young players have represented Buckinghamshire age group teams. Girls have been encouraged to join and there are now 9 female players; the aim is eventually to develop enough new talent for an all female team.

The results of these changes have been positive in two ways. The club's first eleven is now in Division 1 of the Cherwell league and finished third during the most recent season. The second and third elevens play competitive cricket in lower divisions of the same league and there are still Sunday friendlies and Wednesday 20 over competitions for those who prefer the more relaxed approach. The club's improvement in coaching and young player development has enabled it to achieve the 'Clubmark' accreditation, given to those who reach standards agreed by the English Cricket Board. There are now organized tours – the most recent one to Edinburgh – and arrangements to bring in overseas players for one or more seasons.

During our discussion, Chris Bowles and Lee Beesley made it clear that, despite this improvement, there are still challenges ahead. In addition to the desire to be more integrated with the village as mentioned last month, there is also a need to build on the enthusiasm of the young cricketers. 'We want the younger generation to take the lead in building the club's future' said Chris, 'while still retaining contact and using the experience of those who have taken the club this far. We don't want those who retire to fade away'.

This sounds like a tough call but also a recipe for future success. The other essential element in the recipe is the continuing support of the volunteers who give their time so readily. The club is an asset to the local area and we should all wish them well.

Follow Long Marston Cricket Club at
www.longmarstoncc.co.uk

Read *Village News* online at:
www.wilstone.me (Click on Village News)

The Puttenham Page

compiled by Christine Rutter

FRIEINDS OF PUTTENHAM CHURCH

JUMBLE SALE

SATURDAY, 6th APRIL – 2 P.M.

CECILIA HALL, PUTTENHAM

It is Jumble Sale season again! Which means time to spring-clean cupboards and drawers of all your unwanted items. If it will fit in a car, we will sell it. (NO videos, please). Clothes, china, books, CDs., shoes, gardening and household items, etc.

Please leave your items in the porch of Cecilia Hall. **If you can leave most of your deposits until the two weeks running up to the Sale, that would be most helpful.**

HELP is always needed for sorting during the week prior and during the sale on the Saturday. It is a lot of fun, and if you can help, please contact Christine: 07514 548289

Cecilia Tea Rooms

Friday, 26th April. 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. £4.50 per head

Our usual range of homemade sandwiches and cakes, together with all the tea/coffee you can drink! You are most welcome to just drop in, but booking your seats helps with catering. Christine: 07514 548289

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PUTTENHAM – OUR NEW SOCIAL PROGRAMME FOR 2019:

Saturday	6th April		Jumble Sale
Friday	26th April		Cecilia Tea Room
Wednesday	1st May	**	May-Day 6am churchyard / 6.30am breakfast
Thursday	30th May		Badapple Theatre "The Frozen Roman"
Friday	28th June		Cecilia Tea Rooms
Friday	9th August		Cecilia Tea Rooms
Saturday	5th October		Jumble Sale
Friday	11th October		Cecilia Tea Rooms
Saturday	26th October		October Supper

Due to their popularity, we have increased from 3 to 4 Tea Rooms this year. See full details of all these events in the Village News on the Puttenham Page as the year progresses. ** Omitted this item last time.

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Social Awareness

by Leslie Barker

BEFORE the meeting Leslie had suggested we look at the current edition of *Comment* and count the number of articles which raise awareness. Do this for yourself – I counted at least six in the February issue.

Jeremy Buckman began by thanking the members for accepting his offer to co-ordinate the Men's Society and chair their meetings, on the retirement of John Hawkes. John was thanked for all he had done, particularly in establishing the society as a viable group, and in encouraging men from the villages to join. One was Jeremy, who was well qualified to take over having already taken on the role of organising the Society's dinners, and also being the leader of a local cycling group.

The meeting proper then opened with nine members attending and three apologies. A card was signed for Rosemary and Bill Carpenter, as Rosemary had recently been in hospital for a couple of days while relatives looked after Bill.

Jeremy then opened the discussion on social awareness by going round the table and asking each member for one aspect they thought particularly important.

Ted began with being neighbourly, and looking out for their next door neighbours' needs. Later someone added that, due to age or circumstances, that neighbours, family and friends rather than the wider country and world problems might dominate our concerns.

David G said that with the declining number of clubs and gatherings there were fewer places for social interaction, and hence awareness, for both young and old. He recalled six clubs he belonged to in his youth.

David W said that as well as having concern for family, friends and close associates we should include the much wider world of local, national and international concerns and that this concern should involve action.

Leslie mentioned the particular needs of national issues such as homelessness and refugees.

John said the ability to relate to and share the feelings of others was important.

Clive G thought we had now covered everything.

Clive R mentioned that the Rector keeps us informed of parish needs by the use of emails, websites and Facebook.

Martin thought that the concept involved being aware of the needs of others and how to assist them, and responsibility to avoid being an unnecessary burden on one's neighbours.

Jeremy himself had looked through the last three editions of *Comment.* Attitudes are important; for example a new housing estate meets obvious needs, but "not in my back garden."

Awareness should lead to action but there is nimbyism in us all. From the ensuing discussion, often with two animated debates at the same time, showed that while aware of the housing shortage members did not understand its causes, nor who was responsible for solving it. The different roles of developers, local and central government, housing associations and technical terms like 'affordable' were not widely understood.

Leslie as a housing architect, but not an expert on other aspects of housing, attempted a very brief history of housing the poor. In the mid 19th century Christians encouraged the idea of five per cent philanthropy whereby investors would loan at less than the market rate . The LCC later took on the task of housing the poor, and after the First World War, built healthy homes fit for heroes - to provide men fit for the army and with gardens to grow their own food. Quaker industrialists built villages, complete with amenities, some not limited to their own employees.

Then in the mid 20th century churches were amongst those establishing housing associations to provide an alternative and addition to council housing. A similar initiative is required today as the housing shortage has been increasing since the 1970s, but is now so acute that it requires a national and not just Christian response.

Our awareness was very much centred on housing and homelessness, and returned to this even after Jeremy had reminded us of the wider remit. One continuing question was how do we help those who are unwilling to seek help?

One "off piste" debate was on prefabricated housing. We looked at photographs of Y Cube prefabricated housing for young people in south London developed by the YWCA, like the one below.

We can try to keep 'socially aware' by reading a daily paper, listening to radio and TV news and current affairs programmes; also by keeping in touch with family and friends by using modern communications methods as much as possible.

We set the date for the next meeting on a Tuesday (Pancake Day) so as to be able to attend services on Ash Wednesday.

For details of meetings, including lifts, contact Jeremy, email jeremybuckman814@gmail.com. All men are invited to attend meetings which are usually on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm (meals available) at the Half Moon in Wilstone.

Local names and numbers

Herts Police non-emergency number: **101**
Berkhamsted and Tring Safer Neighbourhood Team
Sergeant Ryan Hemmings supported by PC Mark Procter,
PCSO Martin Leadbetter and PCSO Tommy Walter
01707 354192

Fly-tipping reports
Call Dacorum Waste Services 01442 228000
Call the police if you see a crime being committed.

Reports of river flooding
Environment Agency 0845 988 1188

Cecilia Hall (Puttenham)
Christine Rutter 07514 548289
Brownies
Rachel Friedli 01442 827577
Guides
Sheila Hill 01442 823463
Cubs
Jane Dawson 07759 888 085
Scouts
Kate Blanchard 07971 404465
LM&P Horticultural Society
David Severs 01296 661021
St Cross Wilstone
Clergy Rev'd Didier Jaquet 01525 240 465
Churchwarden
Ken Martin 01442 822894
St Mary's Puttenham
Rector Rev'd Huw Bellis 01442 822170
Churchwarden
Christine Rutter 07514 548289
All Saints Long Marston
Clergy Rev'd Jane Banister 01442 822170
Tring Rural Parish Council - Chairman
Malcolm Morgan 01296 661747
Clerk to the Parish Council
Chloe Collins email: tringruralclerk@gmail.com
Villages Warden
Colin Reedman 01442 822031
Long Marston Victory Hall
Hall hire: Gillie Mann 01296 668548
Long Marston Cricket Club
Chris Bowles chair@longmarstoncc.co.uk
Long Marston 1st Steps Pre-School
Jo Zygiert / Maria Adams 07925 185311
Long Marston Baby & Toddler Group
Tara Thirkettle 07796 965171
Long Marston Tennis Club
Jackie Anwyl 01296 663810
Long Marston Football Club
Daphne Bateman 01296 668054
Long Marston School 01296 668386

Member of Parliament (House of Commons)
David Gauke 0207 219 4459
Or to make an appointment call: 01923 771781
Long Marston Victory Hall Dog Training
Mike Ward 01296 668361
Sing-Wilstone
Jo Woodbridge 01442 891444
Village News
Colin Moore 01442 826976
Whitchurch Morris Men
John Bush 01296 641382
Wilstone Allotment Assn.
Mick McManus 01442 828748
Wilstone Village Hall
Bookings: Tony Short 01442 823096
Wilstone Toddlers
Jane Cole 01442 828272
WI
Margaret Kaye 01296 662975
Wilstone Community Shop 01442 891167

Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.

Thank you …

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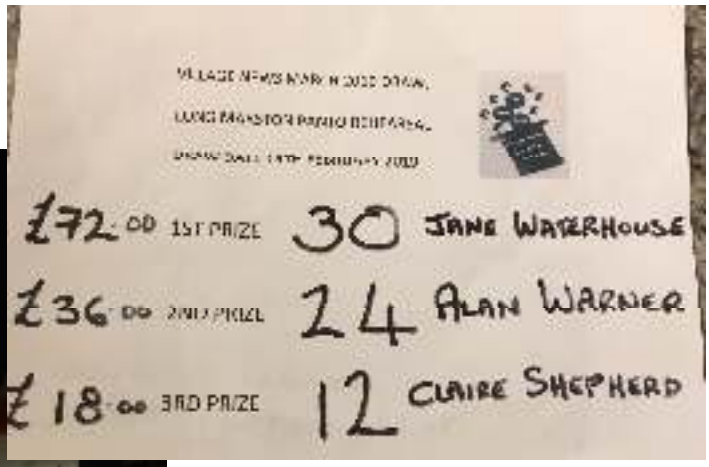
(Please note this is EDITORWLMP in lower case)

Deadline for items to go in the April edition is: Wednesday 20 March 2019
The editor will be Colin Davenport

Village news can be viewed online at:
www.wilstone.me.uk (Click on Village News)

March VN 100's Club Draw
The draw was made in Long Marston at the dress rehearsal of Robin Hood and Babes in the Wood by The Sheriff of Nottingham and Nurse Penny Cillin!



Spotters' Corner No. 443

Class MY dormant Danish diesel

THIS veteran of Danish State Railways (DSB) shows its American connections with its bull-nose and the letters 'GE' for General Electric displayed on the front. An example of the General Electric MX range, it was in fact built in Sweden for Danish Railways by Nydqvist & Holm AB (NOHAB). Known in Denmark as Class MY, 59 examples were built between 1954 and 1965. These diesel electrics are powered by one 16-cylinder GM-EMD engine developing 1,950hp and rated for a top speed of 83 mph (or 133 km/h if you're Danish). Locomotive No. 1029, pictured here, is a surviving example but did look a little lonely when spotted in the sidings at Fredericia on the way to Copenhagen. Often these vintage engines are held in reserve in case all the modern electrics fail. But then of course, you have to get it to start. *PB.*

Gold Shoes; the Sheriff who loved money

by our man with the martini, Luke B. Hynde-Yew

AUDIENCES were stirred, not shaken, once again by this year's Panto Spectacular – Neil Gurney's Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood. The roller-coaster ride of a story goes (something) like this:

The King has gone off, so his niece Marion (Sally Smith) is staying with the quite ghastly Sheriff of Nottingham (Martin Winship), whose older brother, having popped his clogs, has dumped his two appalling sprogs, the Babes; Jemima (Marie Gorton) and Jeremy (Samuel Watson) on the Sheriff of the Fancy Footwear as well. The children arrive with their most attractive nurse Penny Cillin (Terry Veal) who gives the Sheriff something to think about – his bro's will - which reveals that if the nippers get bumped off he cops the lot.

Dastardly plot follows dastardly plot, but all are thwarted by the magnificent muscle-bound hunk that is Robin Hood (Chris Hodges), ably assisted by that holier than holy Friar Tuck (Pat Daniels). Amazingly, while saving the Babes from several fates worse than or actually the same as death, Robin still finds time to sweep Marion off her feet without serious injury to either, steal bags of gold (allegedly to give to the poor) and sing harmoniously with his band of Merry Men (Annabelle Groom, Florence Groom, Melissa Holland, Millie Parker, Pippa Tod and George White).

Throughout all these shenanigans Trixie the Pixie (Vanessa Iley) and her (useless; just useless) pal Ollie the Owl (Ana Holland) come to magical assistance whenever they are called.

It is regrettable that Jeremy has constant trouble with almost everyone fiddling with his flies (you had to be there). He also repeatedly throws Haribos to the children. (It has been reported that he kept the sweets in his nappy. This is being looked into.)

All's well that ends well – the Babes are saved, Robin and Marion are pledged to be married, and the Sheriff is put on the rack (he thought they were just pulling his leg).

All panto photos by John Kaye