

# Village news

April 2026

Puttenham  
Astrope  
Long Marston  
Gubblecote  
Wilstone  
Little Tring



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

## Breaking News The Recall

In a surprise move, the government announced recently that a White Paper would be presented in the current parliamentary term to set in motion the reformation of the Local Defence Force, or Home Guard as it was formerly known. This initiative is in response to the deteriorating world situation and the consequent threat to national security.

This initiative is expected to get cross party support as the government will reach out to the Countries, regions and communities across the UK in order to ensure a fully inclusive force. Protected characteristics will be observed.

To allow for rapid deployment without the need for bus passes the force will utilise the extensive network of inland waterways rivers canals etc. The government will release its huge stockpile of rubber dinghies . However, there could be an issue over the supply of dinghies. Legal opinion will be sought from the Attorney General as to whether France under International Law has any claim to the dinghies. A minister stated, " it would a simple matter to negotiate a lease back deal with the French". When asked if this would be a wet-lease, he sidestepped the question and said, " the government will always do what is in the best interest of the United Kingdom".

The force could be fully mobilised by the end of the current



An AI impression of Tring Rural company in action at Wilstone .

parliament; the white paper is due out on the 1st of April 2026.

A government spokesman said, "We are clear that the general populace will be reassured to know that the old men of their country are on guard." He added that in keeping with modern times, old ladies, many of whom are spoiling for a fight, will also be recruited.

A Tring Rural Company is to be formed, and volunteers are invited to attend "sign-up" sessions at village halls in two weeks and three weeks, respectively. The hall toilets will be open. Only those over 85 should apply. Private nurses will be permitted to attend. Applicants will be expected to know if they take sugar in their tea (provided).

## New development in Long Marston could threaten 120 year old Black Poplars.

The Woodland Trust describes Black Poplars as:

"Imposing, elegant, rare. The black poplar was once a staple of Britain's landscape but these days, the trees are few and far between".

See page 2 for the full story.



## The Brothers

By Gill Macdonald

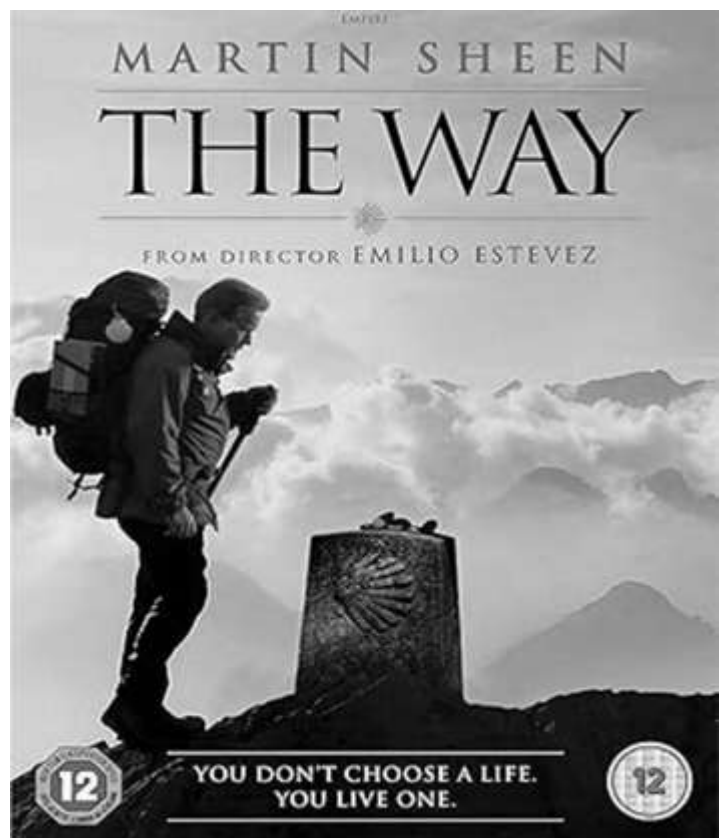
If you live in or around the vicinity of Long Marston, you'll be so used to seeing these trees, you'll hardly notice them. From a

distance they look like one big tree, but they are in fact two male black poplars growing side by side, which is why I call them the Brothers. They have been growing alongside the Astrope Lane ditch at the edge of Home Close and Marston Court for the past 120 years. Just think of all the things they have seen since the beginning of the twentieth century. All the changes in the village, the First and Second World Wars when the school was bombed, and those young American airmen who died in the plane that crashed in the Braid. The first motor cars and the decline of the horse and cart. Astrope Lane is now a rat run, regularly congested at the crossroads during rush hour, but when they were saplings, life was more rural and leisurely. They have seen pubs close and the loss of the butcher, the baker, the garage, and the village shop. New homes being built, all the villagers coming and going, children being ferried by parents to the new school. Home to so many wild creatures, I have counted up to forty jackdaws in their high-rise branches, not to mention the moths and insects, the kestrel and barn owl and other creatures they shelter.

Now there is planning permission for a new development on their field. Where once horses grazed, buttercups grew and ducks nested on the pond, there will be houses. They were accused of being unsafe and lacking amenity value, but Black Poplars, a rare and endangered species, are here for a reason. They only grow where there's water, and Long Marston, a village on the edge of the flood plain, needs all the help it can get to stay safe, especially in these times of global warming when extreme weather is fast becoming the norm and flood risk is increasing. As well as having deep and thirsty roots, these trees work hard to purify the air for us, taking in pollutants and CO<sub>2</sub> from the heavy traffic, giving us clean air to breathe. So quietly and elegantly, these strange and beautiful trees, without us noticing, improve the quality of life in this village. Deformed by pollarding back in the 1900s, the wood of black poplars before the advent of plastics had many uses: clothes pegs, fence posts, artificial limbs and walking sticks, to name a few. This is the reason these trees have a bad reputation. It's not their fault!

Back in 2021, when the trees were condemned as unsafe, concerned villagers paid for an experienced tree surveyor who had worked for Dacorum Council to check the trees. Overall he found them to be strong and healthy despite years of neglect but in need of the crowns being taken out and a general tidying up. Otherwise, they posed no immediate risk, and this work was carried out. If they are to survive the new development, further pollarding will be required, as with the other black poplars growing alongside the Astrope Lane ditch; otherwise, the pollarded limbs, as they grow thicker and heavier, can become dangerous. Despite what we humans have done to them for our own selfish ends, these trees have shown an amazing ability to survive, even after hard pollarding, and the Brothers are particularly strong and healthy survivors of this brutal treatment. They continue to provide shelter for the barn owl and numerous species of wildlife; they continue to work hard for us and to give this village its unique personality. Like the famous beech trees in Ashridge, black poplars define this area. We are special because of them, and if we look after them as they deserve, they will be here for another 120 years, and we will reap the rewards. Nature matters. Trees matter. We can grow together.

# Wilstone Film Nights



An emotionally charged film about a father undertaking his late son's attempt to walk Camino de Santiago, accompanied by waifs and strays picked up along the way. Each of these pilgrims has their own reasons for undertaking the 35 day journey. This is a spiritual film rather than religious and is gently funny, and will keep a smile on your face throughout.

Friday April 17th

At Wilstone Village Hall. Doors  
open at 7.15pm.

Film starts at 8pm. Licenced  
bar.

Tickets £7.50 from Wilstone  
Community Shop.

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	130			
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	94			
		63 x 194		
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**Village News** is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read. Please let us know if we are not!

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**The editor for the May edition is John McCall and the deadline for items is:****Wed 15 April 2026.**

You may notice a slight change to the weight and feel of the magazine. It will be printed on, from this edition, a smooth, lower-weight paper.

Also, we will print only the two cover pages in colour. Both changes will make a significant reduction in printing costs.

On a positive note, advertising in the magazine remains solid; however, the number of new households continues to rise, with a stream of new houses in the pipeline across our villages – adding to our costs. It is likely we will need to make some further adjustments if the magazine is to continue to be viable.

We are receiving more articles, and with this edition it has proved challenging to fit them all in. Some photos did not make it, and other items have had to be rearranged to fit the space available.

I note from the council report that Long Marston is on a list of 100 villages in Herts to have a 20 mph limit. Apparently, Wilstone is on the next list, so presumably we will have to wait for some time.

On a less savoury note, concern is being expressed by Wilstone residents about the amount of dog poo that is not being picked up, particularly on the rec. Wilstone attracts several dog walkers, some from outside the village with groups of 5 or so dogs often off the lead in public spaces and footpaths which then are difficult to control and monitor. Please, everyone **pick it up** and protect our kids!

I chose a photograph of a Brimstone butterfly for the front page header, prompted by the article about Millhoppers Nature Reserve on page 17. The brimstone butterfly is one of the earliest butterflies to appear each spring. The name is derived from the male's bright yellow colour. 'Brimstone' is an old term for sulphur, a bright yellow element.

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: [www.wilstone.me.uk](http://www.wilstone.me.uk) or just scan me

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## What's on in and around our villages

### Diary Dates

**Monday 6 April** Easter Egg Hunt 2-4 pm Victory Hall LM

**Fridays 17 April** Film Night at Wilstone Village Hall, 7.15pm "The Way".

**Saturday 25 April** "Dung Beatles" 8pm Wilstone Village Hall Tickets £17.50 .

**Saturday 2 May** Pet Tea Party 1.30-5 pm Cecelia Hall Put.

**Saturday 9 May** Tring Family Fun Day 11am to 3pm

**Saturday 13 June and 18 July** "Sessions on the Farm" See Mead's advert ds for details

**Sunday 14 June** Wilstone Fete

**Saturday 1st August** The Long Marston 'Make, Bake and Grow Show'

**Farmers market** Saturdays 9.00-2.00 Church Sq Tring  
**11, 25 April 9 , 23 May**

### Tring Rural Parish Council Wed 29 April Wilstone Village Hall

APM and Council Meeting start at 7.30pm  
The public are welcome to attend

## Would you like to know more about the Wilstone Reservoir



### Project?

As the strengthening of the reservoir banks is completed, Mark Stephens, who is the project manager for the Canal and River Trust, is doing a presentation to anyone from the villages who would be interested and like more information.

**Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup> at 11.45 until 1pm**

**At Wilstone Village Hall**

**This is a FREE Wilstone Village Hall event and everyone is welcome.** For any more information, please contact Peter Walker on 07768 650684

## Church Services for April

Services could change so please check online at <https://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events> or phone the Rectory on 01442 822170 We also will have live streamed services online so please take a [look](#) .

**Wednesday 1 April – Holy Week**  
8pm – Compline – St Peter & St Paul, Tring

**Thursday 2 April – Maundy Thursday**  
10am – Service – St Peter & St Paul, Tring  
8pm – Service – St Peter & St Paul, Tring

**Friday 3 April – Good Friday**  
11am – Walk of Witness, Tring  
2pm – Joint service for Village churches – St Mary's, Puttenham

6pm – Joint service for Village churches – All Saints, Long Marston

**Sunday 5 April; – Easter Sunday**  
10am – Joint Holy Communion service for Village Churches – All Saints, Long Marston

**Tuesday 7 April**  
10am Morning Prayer – St Cross Wilstone

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April – Easter 2**  
8am Holy Communion cw  
10am Worship for All service at Tring and 10am Holy Communion cw service in Aldbury

**Tuesday 14<sup>h</sup> April**  
10am – Holy Communion cw, St Cross Wilstone

**Sunday 19 April – Easter 3**  
10am – Holy Communion cw service at All Saints, Long Marston

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April**  
10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

**Saturday 25 April**  
Quiet Day at St Mary's, Puttenham

**Sunday 26 April – Easter 5**  
3.30pm – Evensong service at St Mary's, Puttenham

**Tuesday 28 April**  
10am – Holy Communion cw– St Cross, Wilstone.

## Join the successful team at Wilstone Village Hall.

Wilstone Village Hall is in great shape, thanks to the team of people who give their time and skills in keeping it that way.

We want someone who can help us at committee meetings with taking minutes, issuing agendas, and attending meetings every two months. This is an official role on the committee, helping it run efficiently and especially supporting the chairman. If you are a working person your company may support this role in giving something back to the community.

If you would like to join the team, just call Peter Walker on 07768 605 684

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: [www.wilstone.me.uk](http://www.wilstone.me.uk) or just scan me



# Easter Egg Hunt

By popular demand. All ages welcome

Meet at Victory Hall, Long Marston

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April

Any time from 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Hunt entry free. Donations welcome

All proceeds to the Tower renovation fund



Follow the clues to the Old Tower to win a prize.

Learn more about the history of the Tower and the garden

Enjoy tea and cakes

THE OLD CHURCH TOWER



CALLING ALL FAMILIES - THE TEDDIES FLY AGAIN!

## SATURDAY 9TH MAY

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the WI Sat 2nd May 1.30 - 5pm, Cecilia Hall

## The Puttenham Pet Tea Party



Pet Photos Artist & more  
Meet Hagrid's Dogs  
Homemade Tea & Cakes  
Puppacchino's Doggie treats  
Pre-Loved for pets  
Kids games

Pet Blessing in St Mary's Church  
Working Dogs demo  
Pet Talent Show  
Doggy Catwalk

All proceeds to Long Marston & Puttenham WI, Appledown Rescue & Aylesbury Womens Refuge



## Spring Fayre

Save the dates!

25 April to 17 May 2026

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Saturday 25 April  
10am-2pm

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[www.tringtogether.org.uk](http://www.tringtogether.org.uk)



## Wilstone's Great British Fete on Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup>

We need **you** to help make this event great. We are looking for adults and teenagers to spend an hour or so helping to set up the various stalls and the arena and to decorate the ground; And on the day, to assist in running the games and or helping in the café.

The more time and help you can give, makes life easier for everyone else. Please register on the volunteer list in the Wilstone Community Shop. Make the fete great!



WILSTONE VILLAGE HALL  
*presents*



THE *Dung*  
BEATLES

Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> at 8pm

Wilstone Village Hall

Ticket £17.50

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Tuesday 6.00pm  
Wednesday 9.00am and 9.30am  
Thursday 9.30am and 6.00pm  
Friday 9.30am  
Saturday 9.00am

**Nora Grace Hall, Tring**  
Wednesday 11.30am



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## Home Ground Café

The café has now been open for over 6 months and has become a very popular place for a bite to eat at any time of the day. Yummy cakes and scones – we've all become *dottie* about them. With coffee or tea, delicious lunches of homemade quiche, soup and sausage rolls are served with a warm welcome by Helena's cheerful team. There are many opportunities to meet up with friends or just bump into someone for a chat. The café is now part of the Chatty Café scheme, and on a Wednesday morning between 10.30 and 11.30am there is a table set aside for anyone to join in and have a chat. So if you fancy meeting some new faces or know someone who would, why not join in? The special days have also proved very successful, with the café fully booked all day for Mothering Sunday! So if you want to be sure of a table, be sure to make a booking at 07522 287878 or at [dottieaboutcake@gmail.com](mailto:dottieaboutcake@gmail.com).

Trees and shrubs have been planted adjacent to the café over the winter, and in April we begin the next stage of the project ... a terrace. The Engage an Engraving scheme, which has now closed, has raised more funds to help make the development of a terrace possible. A big thank you to all of you who bought a paver. I can't wait to see them in position and read all your messages!

We are collecting outdoor furniture for the terrace, so if you are planning to change your furniture this year, then please consider donating it to Home Ground Café.

## Easter Egg Hunt Monday 6th April at 2pm, run by The Old Church Tower Group

It's back by popular demand!! Last year the weather was dreadful ... wet and windy and you came out to support us even so. We are therefore expecting it to be even busier this year!


The afternoon begins at Victory Hall any time between 2pm and 4pm. There you will be able to collect a quiz which will guide you along Station Road to Chapel Lane to the Old Tower and churchyard; from there you will walk across the field towards Marston Court and return to the hall. At the hall all children will be presented with an Easter egg!! Tea and cake will be available for everyone ... whether you took part in the quiz or not.


## The Long Marston and Puttenham WI

We've got some treats in store for you this year.

On Saturday 2nd May from 1.30pm there will be the first ever Puttenham Pet Tea Party in Cecelia Hall and St Mary's Church. See the separate article for more details.

On Sunday 28th June from 2pm to 5pm the WI will be providing tea and cake at the Open Garden event organised by The Old Church Tower Group. Watch out for more details about the Open Garden, but it promises to be an exciting new event.







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# Every Picture Tells a Story

## A Story of Longub Puttastone

By Martin Winship

The rain had finally stopped, or at least paused. It had started back in January, soon into the New Year, and had continued without a break for what seemed like months. In truth, pretty much the whole of January and February had been seen through a dispiriting curtain of drip and drizzle, and one or two of the residents of Longub Puttastone had seriously considered the possibility of building an ark. Certainly sandbags had been issued (and used) by many property owners in the hopes of protecting their establishments from the ever-present threat of flooding. There had been incidents of inundation in the past; too many and too serious for anyone to be blasé about the chances of a repeat. So far, recent work on improving the drains and clearing out roadside ditches had kept the village reasonably free from damaging intrusion of the well above average rainfall. Fortunately, the bar of the Half Head pub had remained "wet" throughout the rainy season, and Jake and Old Siegfried were busy slaking their habitual thirsts, sitting at either side of a cheerfully crackling fire. Wan sunshine slanted in through a window, illuminating hosts of tiny floating dust motes in its rays. Jake was enjoying his pint of Old and Nasty. He was warm and comfortable and had achieved a sort of waking dreaminess and was only slightly aware of Siegfried's apparently endless moaning about conditions on his allotment.

"It's like a blooming quagmire" Siegfried was carping. "You can't plant anything in soil that's more like Brown Winsor Soup than blooming loam. I spent the whole morning trying to create some blooming drainage to dry things up a bit. It was hopeless. It's what's just under the soil you see. I must have dug up fifty spades of clay, and still got blooming nowhere".

Jake sat up. Something Siegfried said had penetrated through to his dreaming mind. "Eh? Really? Did you read it then?"

"Read what? What are you on about?" Siegfried frowned at Jake.

"The mucky book," explained Jake. "Fifty Shades of Grey".

Siegfried gave Jake an old-fashioned look. "You dozy dollop. 'I dug up fifty spades of clay on my blooming allotment,' I said. I didn't think you were paying proper attention."

"Oh. "Right," said Jake, obviously somewhat disappointed. "Did you hear about what Alice 'dug up' the other day? She's still finding some amazing stuff in that cottage of hers, you know."

"No. What was it this time? " asked Siegfried.

"A priceless Old Master," Jake told him, pleased as usual to be the bearer of such portentous news.

"Rubbish! " snorted Old Siegfried. "I don't believe it. And I won't believe it until some blooming expert proves me wrong."

\* \* \* \*

Alice had indeed made quite an exciting discovery while rummaging in a dark corner of one of the several lumber rooms in her cottage. She had had a good productive day, preparing a large batch of her Celebrated Brussel Sprout Relish, together with various pots and jars of more exotic balms and unguents, mostly based on herbs grown in her own garden, but others containing more unusual and obscure plants that she had gathered 'in the wilds'. She had also baked a double upside-down cake, which of course meant that it was actually the right way up; you really needed to see the recipe to understand. And having completed her other domestic chores, she had found the time to do some more investigating of the myriad dark recesses her property was blessed with. She had found a hoard of Witch Bottles, sealed, and containing nails and hairs, and some unappealing-looking liquid. She put them carefully away again, deciding with little hesitation not to mention them to anyone, least of all Old Siegfried. She similarly determined to keep quiet about the mummified cat she also found. Soon after this very outré discovery, she came across a small framed picture, leaning against the wall in a space behind a chest. On closer examination, it seemed to be an oil painting, and although it was remarkably dirty with a layer of thick dark varnish, it was possible to make out the representation of an old country cottage and garden. She took the picture into her kitchen to give it a cautious wipe, and peer at it in full daylight. It was definitely a cottage, quite similar to her own, mounted in an ornamental metal frame that had a dull lustre.

At the next opportunity, she had shown Jake the picture, and asked him what he thought of it, for Jake had a reputation for knowing about this sort of thing, as well as being a renowned fettler and fossicker. He had advised Alice to have the thing properly cleaned, as in its present state it was impossible to form a strong opinion. (Now although, as a point of principle, Alice had not sold any of the great assortment of items left in the cottage by its previous resident, she told herself that the painting was different. That it was 'just another picture' and she rationalised with herself that selling it would be no sort of betrayal. In any case, she had been wanting to replace her old besom for quite some time. And new ones were not cheap). Fortuitously for Alice, Ben Winchester's much younger wife was willing and able to undertake the work. Ben had had a relapse into his old ways; he had decided to extend his impersonating repertoire from just Elvis, to include as well The Big Bopper, but the inevitable consequences had followed, and he was once more firmly bound up in the surgical strapping. In the proceeding relative peace and quiet his much younger wife had enrolled in a restoration course, which included picture cleaning. It did not take long to work a remarkable transformation on Alice's piece. The clear image of an extremely picturesque country cottage fronted by an exquisite flower garden emerged. Even the frame received a much-needed de-gunging and came out beautified and shining. Alice was thrilled, and Jake was evidently impressed. He advised Alice to have the thing valued by someone with more expertise and knowledge than he had. (Alice's excitement over her serendipitous find mounted. Her expectations for an indulgent purchase once she realised the value of the picture steadily increased. She had been wanting new bed linen for some time, and had seen some wonderful sheets and pillowcases in pale pink, decorated with black cats.

So one day, soon after the cleaning was complete, Alice carefully wrapped her precious cargo up and took the infrequent bus service into Bling, the nearby bustling market town. Once there, she headed for

**Continued on next page**

## From our Reporter at the council meeting

The second TRPC meeting of 2026 was held at Cecilia Hall, Puttenham, on February 25th..

### Up close and personal

The position of the chairs in Cecilia Hall - up close and right in front of the councillors tables - was a good indication that this meeting was going to be rather cosy! Only four councillors – the clerk, the new warden and your very own Village News reporter, were present. This limited audience made the proceedings rather informal, in spite of the chair's best efforts to keep to the agenda!

### Where've you 'bin'?

Cllr Fox kicked off the meeting with an update about Long Marston's recreation ground car park: the contractor has carried out some remedial work to improve water run-off, and new village warden Mark has added caps to the wooden posts. Cllr Fox added that extra posts and perhaps a rail were required to protect the gate to the children's play area, as someone had already driven off the edge.

Warden Mark asked for replacement galvanised metal liners for the bins in the parish, as the bottom has fallen out of many of them. This prompted Clerk Chloe to advise us that the dog waste bins are being removed across Dacorum and will be replaced with general waste bins if they are not near a general waste bin already. Warden Mark stated that two bins would be needed near Wilstone Canal, because the dog waste bin is always filled with other stuff.

### Take it slow

Cllr Fox reported that Herts County Council have approved the funds for 20mph signs in villages. Long Marston is on the list of 100 villages to benefit from this; Wilstone is on the next list.

Also proceeding slowly are orders for engraved paving bricks for the Home Ground Cafe terrace. Clerk Chloe said there had been problems with the online payment system, but that this was now fixed. However, orders needed to have been placed by mid or end of March, as work on the terrace will begin in April.

Chloe was also pleased to report that the cafe's wi-fi was due to be installed on March 12th, after eight months of trying. It seems that Cllr Fox's email to the new chief executive of Open Reach may have done the trick!

### Bordering on the ridiculous

Cllr Wood gave an update on an application in principle for five self-build homes in Lukes Lane. There are concerns about flood risk and heavy traffic, and some residents have not received any formal notification. It was agreed that further clarification was needed.

This update prompted Clerk Chloe to tell us about the Bucks Local Plan. It appears that Bucks County Council have earmarked a significant part of Long Marston to meet their housing needs! Apparently a "desktop review" has highlighted an area just off Cheddington Lane, on both sides of the Herts/Bucks border, as being suitable. Cllr Fox noted this with concern! On a positive note, development of the airfield has been deemed 'not suitable'.

### Footpath flooding

Although the rain has recently held off, at the time of the meeting everywhere was very wet and muddy. There was a discussion about the state of the wooden bridges crossing various streams and the impassable footpaths due to flooding. It appears that, even if these footpaths are on private land, the person to report any issues to is [Clayton.Rae@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:Clayton.Rae@dacorum.gov.uk); he will be able to pass any concerns on to the relevant landowner.

**Date of next meeting:** 29th April 2026, 7.30pm, Wilstone Village Hall.

### Continued from previous page

the impressive edifice that housed Bling Auctions and asked to see Clarence Jones, the fine arts expert. With very little delay, Mr Jones was examining Alice's picture with the aid of a magnifying lens that he had screwed into an eye. He took his time and 'hummed' and 'harred' a good deal. (Alice grew quite tense. She was thinking about a very special, very expensive shot silk dress she had seen in the window of a posh shop in Bling).

Well", he said eventually, "This is obviously a fairly old Chester Silverware frame. A good size and in fine fettle. Worth a few bob, certainly".

A pleased smile played on Alice's lips. "Very good," she agreed. "But what about the picture itself? What can you tell me about it? And what sort of valuation? "

"The picture? " returned Mr Jones. "Well, I'm pretty sure it's an early Fry."

Alice frowned. "I'm not familiar with that artist," she admitted.

"Artist"? Mr Jones chuckled. "He was I suppose, only in a sense. He was a Chocolatier. You know; Fry's Turkish delight. And Five Boys chocolate bar. Your picture is the lid of one of his early boxes of soft centres. Not worth anything of course"

Alice slumped in her seat. Her dreams were as shot as the silk of her fancied dress.

### Inklings by Steve Thompson



You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: [www.wilstone.me.uk](http://www.wilstone.me.uk) or just scan me



# More on the Long Marston Pubs

By Christine Rutter

I was very interested to read James' article in the March issue about the four village pubs. The pictures attached will be added to my collection of photos in my village history files.

However, I was particularly interested in the Queens Head because, many years back, I had the task of putting in print the memoirs of Mrs Mary Ridpath, née Gregory, where she spoke about the Queens Head of many years ago.



**Queen's Head to left of White Hart**

I would guess that we need to go back to the early 1930s. Mary recalls that the Queens Head was run by two elderly ladies, Mrs Smith and Miss Jordon (I wonder whether these two ladies were sisters). Both ladies were very refined and preferred to keep to the earlier style of dress, i.e., floor-length skirts, buttoned black boots and a small head covering.

They must have done well in the trade because the Queen's Head is still going strong today. At the time, their neighbours at the White Hart also appeared to be doing a good trade.

With little travel and no television or "social media", the village pubs were the general source of conversation and village news, especially for the menfolk.

## Sudoku Corner

by Colin Moore

No 197

5	6	1	2	8	3	9	7	4
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6	2	3	9	7	8	4	1	5
4	1	7	3	5	6	8	2	9

Solution on page 18

# WI News

By Clare Hill

## Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers

Did you know...? There are over 30,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests every year in the UK, and sadly fewer than 1 in 10 people survive. Women are also less likely to survive than men. By learning CPR and knowing where defibrillators are located, we can all help give someone the best possible chance of survival.

The Women's Institute meeting in March focused on one of the National WI campaigns... "Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers." Our fabulous speaker David Gwilliams shared his knowledge and experience: David served in the Armed Forces for 13 years, teaching a wide range of skills. Later, while working in civilian roles, he struggled to find accredited first aid and health & safety courses that met the required standards. So he decided to gain all the qualifications himself and now runs Kaill Consultancy & Training Ltd, helping others learn life-saving skills.

David explained the difference between a heart attack and cardiac arrest and how to recognise the signs. Around 25% of women may experience jaw pain and breathlessness, and fast panting can be a symptom of cardiac arrest in children.



The most important message? Dial 999 immediately – the operator will guide you through every step.

David also demonstrated CPR and how to use a defibrillator, and we learned that if CPR is started within 5 minutes, there can be up to an 80% chance of recovery.

Members had a go at hands-on practice with adult, child and infant dummies. It was surprising how much pressure is needed for adult CPR... And yes, sometimes ribs do break, but it could save a life!



It was a fantastic opportunity to practise these potentially life-saving skills. And of course a lovely assortment of homemade cakes and a cuppa!

Everyone can try the free 15-minute online training from the British Heart Foundation:

<https://revivr.bhf.org.uk/>



# Couch to Marathon

## "Run Fatboy Run: The Sequel"

By Samuel Watson

*After barely managing two minutes of running last autumn, Samuel Watson—who grew up in Puttenham—is now attempting the London Marathon for Great Ormond Street Hospital.*

Some readers may remember me from growing up in Puttenham. I'm **Samuel Watson**—I went to Long Marston School and later Tring School, and over the years I was involved in various bits of village life (including the occasional appearance in local pantomimes). Although I now live further away, my parents are still in Puttenham, and my in-laws live in Marsworth, where my wife and I were married at St Mary's Church, so the area still feels very much like home.

This April I'll be attempting something that still sounds slightly ridiculous when I say it out loud: running the London Marathon.

The unusual part is that only a few months ago I could barely run for two minutes.

Back in September I was very much starting from the "couch" end of the famous couch-to-5k idea. At around 20 stone and with very little running experience, even short jogs were a challenge. Somewhere along the way, though, the goal quietly grew from "maybe I'll manage 5k" to "perhaps I could attempt a marathon."

Training has been a mixture of progress and aching legs. I've slowly built up from those first two-minute runs to completing my first half marathon earlier this year in Milton Keynes in 2 hours and 41 minutes. Crossing that finish line felt like a huge milestone—although it was also the moment I realised the full marathon is **twice that distance**.

Life at home adds another layer to the challenge. My wife and I now have a lively three-year-old and a newborn baby, so many training runs happen early in the morning before the rest of the house wakes up.

I'm running the marathon in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity, helping raise funds towards their new **Children's Cancer Centre**, which will support children and families facing incredibly difficult circumstances.

My personal goals are fairly simple: ideally to run the whole thing and finish in under six hours... or at the very least just finish! Friends and family are also placing guesses on two



**Samuel Watson celebrates finishing his first half marathon — proof that "couch to half marathon" is possible, now aiming for the full 26.2 miles for Great Ormond Street Hospital!**

things: my finishing time and what I might weigh when I cross the line — I'll be sure to report back afterwards.

If you'd like to follow the training journey (or support the challenge), you can find updates here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/SamuelMarathon>

The marathon takes place at the end of April, and donations will remain open until the end of May.

And if you happen to be watching from home, keep an eye out for a runner wearing a **brightly coloured bandana and a Great Ormond Street vest**—that will almost certainly be me somewhere along the route, possibly limping slightly somewhere around mile 23. Please do cheer along — every bit of encouragement helps!



Scan to donate

## REPAIR CAFE

Wilstone's Repair Cafe is now in its third year of operation. Held in the village hall, normally on the first Saturday of the month except in August and January, nearly 100 items have been brought for mending or repairing by our small team of experts - two seamstresses and three electrical/mechanical engineers. People whose items that have been repaired have made comments like 'Very happy', 'Brilliant' and 'Beautiful'. There are over 3800 Repair Cafes around the

world and if you'd like to know about them they have a website at [Repair Café - Fix Your Broken Items](#). We're taking a break over the Easter holidays and will back on Saturday 2 May at 10.30am until 1pm. If you're bringing an item for repair please allow enough time for it to be done before 1pm - you can always have a coffee or tea while you wait.

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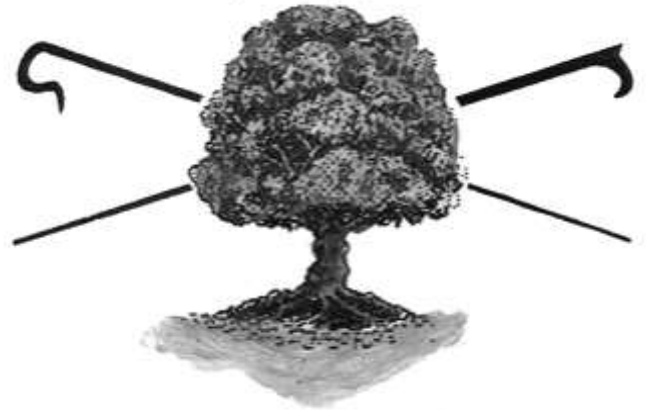
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# Holy Week Services

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to any and all!

Services during Holy Week contain many symbolic acts which draw us into a sense of participation in the story of the last days of Jesus' natural life. It's a week like no other and can be deeply moving.

Monday - Wednesday

**8pm Compline, Tring Church**

Short contemplative services.

Maundy Thursday

We share in communion as we remember the Last Supper. Here, Jesus commanded us to love one another, which he showed in the washing of his disciples' feet, and so we symbolically re-enact this. (This is what gives the day its name, Maundy, from *mandatum*, commandment.) The festal atmosphere gives way to the coming of darkness and

betrayal, and palms of lament are sung as the church and altar are stripped of all ornament. Maundy Thursday liturgy doesn't strictly end; we melt away in the silence, in the spirit of following Jesus and his disciples out into the garden and the ominous watch through the night.

Good Friday

**10am St Peter & St Paul Tring. An all age service**

**11am Walk of Witness starting at Tring Methodist Church**

**2pm St Mary's Puttenham, reflective service.**

**6pm All Saints Long Marston, reflective service.**

Jesus suffers. Jesus dies. The most awful day. We see God's grace as he suffers, is weak, wounded, and killed to enable us to become healed, saved and raised to life.

Holy Saturday

Is the great non-day. Christ is in the tomb, and the disciples are grief-stricken and confused. On Holy Saturday we can hold all our confusion and grief before God in a way that resonates deeply with his story. This is a day of unknowing between death and resurrection. Until...

**8pm St John the Baptist Aldbury, Easter Vigil with new fire. A service designed for all ages.**

In the church calendar days begin at sundown and so we take the first possible opportunity to say, 'Alleluia! Christ is risen!' at this short dramatic service which travels from darkness to light telling the Easter story with fire, water and music. Followed by hot dogs!

Easter Sunday

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**6am St Peter & St Paul Tring, Easter sunrise service with new fire.**

## Opening of New Bridge at Millhoppers Nature Reserve.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 11am

Dacorum Shared Prosperity Funds as well as donations from friends and family of Margaret Noakes following her passing in January 2025. Margaret and her late husband John were heavily involved in the purchase and subsequent management of the site. A plaque in their memory will be unveiled on the bridge.

We would welcome those who knew Margaret and John or just love wildlife to come and celebrate the official opening of the bridge at Millhoppers on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 11am and to join us after for tea and cake at Old Church Cottage

Please note parking is very limited at Millhoppers. Please contact Sarah Noakes on 07549 886 832 if you would like a lift. Millhoppers can be accessed by car from Watery Lane or across footpaths (15 minute walk) from Long Marston.

The wardens and volunteers at Millhoppers Nature Reserve have recently completed the construction of a new wooden bridge across a small stream that runs through the 1.2 hectare site. This reserve is managed by Hertfordshire & Middlesex Butterfly Conservation and provides the habitat for butterflies, moths and other wildlife to flourish. The site was originally bought and managed by a group of locals who campaigned to protect it before it became a Butterfly Conservation Reserve. Funds to construct the new bridge came from a grant from

## Wilstone Great British Fete and Dog Show

Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> W June

Looking for your help

A traditional part of any great British fete is a **tombola stall** and ours always proves very popular. **Can you help** us by donating suitable items such as in date cans, bottles or household items?

If you can please come into Wilstone Community Shop and pop them into the donation box in front of the deli.

Thank you for your generous support and see you on the 14<sup>th</sup> June.

# Lost bike?

This child's pink bike has been standing inside the gate at the top of the footpath between the school and Marston Court for a couple of months. It is a nice bike and in good condition. It would be great to see it back with its owner before it gets swallowed up by vegetation.



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## Easter eggs, chocolate bunnies, gifts and treats – your community shop has them all



As many of us enjoy a well-deserved break over the Easter holidays a team of lovely volunteers will ensure that the village shop will be open every day so all those last-minute or forgotten items of shopping can still be obtained.

These pictures show just a small selection of the wide range of gifts that are available including hand-crafted soft toys; china cups, plates, pots and bowls; eco-friendly cards and beautifully decorated wrapping paper.

And of course, there's all the traditional Easter chocolate goodies and those essential everyday grocery items like milk, eggs and bread that you might have suddenly and unexpectedly run out of.



As always, the shop is keen to try out new lines like different flavoured Magnums. And we're now selling Kombuchas that were obtained in response to a request from a customer.



So why not pop in and see what's new? We look forward to seeing you.

### **Our opening times over Easter are:**

Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday:  
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Saturday: 8am-1pm

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# The Puttenham Page

by Christine Rutter

## ***EASTER at ST.MARY'S***

**Good Friday – 3<sup>rd</sup> April.** 2 p.m. "Hour at the Cross". A quiet contemplative service with a basic "stripped out" church to emphasise the mood of the day. Please come along if you can.

**Saturday – 4<sup>th</sup> April – Church Decorating.** Offers of spring flowers and greenery always very much appreciated. With the church fully dressed again in white and gold, the creation of the Easter Garden and the Pascal Candle brought forward for lighting afresh on Easter Day.

**Sunday – 5<sup>th</sup> April – 8.15 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION** (Book of Common Prayer Service). It is quite some time since we have had our early morning communion service, setting us up for the rest of Easter Day. Please come along, if you can, even if you do not wish to take communion. It really makes the perfect start to Easter Day.

## ***CECILIA TEA ROOMS***

**Friday -10<sup>th</sup> April : 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.** With the longer days ahead of us, we are re-opening the Tea Rooms for the springtime session. A wide selection of sandwiches and hand-make cakes will be available, as well as plenty of tea/coffee, using the setting of an old-style Tea Rooms.

Book your table through Christine: [christine.rutter2@gmail.com](mailto:christine.rutter2@gmail.com) or telephone on 07514 548289.

## ***QUIET DAY at PUTTENHAM***

**Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April : 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.** We shall be welcoming the Revd. Bro. Michael who will give two talks on exploring how Icons can help with our worship. There will be a 12 noon Holy Communion which is available to all, whether you are attending the quiet day or not, and also a soup lunch. If coming for the day (or part thereof, except Communion) please book through the [www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news) website.

## ***THE PUTTENHAM PET TEA PARTY***

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at Cecilia Hall from 1.30 to 5pm.**

Hosted by the ladies of the Long Marston and Puttenham WI, you are invited to join us for an afternoon of fun in honour of our furry friends. The event will be opened by HAGRID'S dogs (as appeared in the Harry Potter films); despite their fierce looks, they are very friendly!

The afternoon will kick off with a Pet Blessing at St Mary's Church, a lovely opportunity for children (and grown-ups) to bring 'all creatures great and small' to meet the local vicar for a very special short service.

Then over to Cecilia Hall to enjoy a fun itinerary of games and activities for dogs & their owners, including:

- An Agility Display with expert trainers and a chance to try it with your dog
- Working dog demonstrations
- A doggy catwalk - Bring your best doggie outfits along and take part with your pooch
- Animal face painting
- Kids games and activities
- Most like its owner
- Lose lead walking (under 15)
- Best trick
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And of course a chance to sample the WI's famous tea and homemade cakes with Puppachinos and treats for anyone with four legs. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Please get in touch for more information, to get involved or if you would like to donate any unused or nearly new pet clothing and accessories (we will arrange to collect it from you). Contact us at [mandputwi@gmail.com](mailto:mandputwi@gmail.com)

*Funds from the event will go towards your local WI with donations to Appledown Rescue and the Aylesbury Women's Refuge.*



## Community, Nature and New Beginnings in Dacorum

By Cllr Caroline Smith-Wright

As spring arrives, there's a real sense of momentum building across Dacorum – with nature, community spirit and local opportunity all coming into focus.

One highlight not to miss is the Wild About Dacorum Community Fair on Thursday 2 April (6–8pm) at The Forum in Hemel Hempstead. This free evening promises to bring people together to celebrate nature and local action, with updates on the future of nature in Dacorum, a chance to discover inspiring local projects, and plenty of opportunities to get involved in volunteering. There'll also be refreshments and a fun eco quiz. It's a great way to connect with others who care about making our borough a greener, wilder place.

That same environmental spirit is reflected in everyday actions too. Remember, recycling your food waste in your green caddy might seem small, but it plays a big role, turning leftovers into nutrient-rich fertiliser for British farmers while reducing harmful methane emissions. It's a simple habit that truly comes full circle, helping grow the food that ends up back on our plates.

Meanwhile, with the seasons changing, the garden waste collections have restarted. Residents who subscribe to the service can once again have their green-lidded bins collected — a timely reminder as gardens begin to wake up after winter.



Finally, this sense of neighbourly connection is also at the heart of the new Sustainable Streets initiative. Bringing residents together in relaxed, home-based groups, it offers practical ways to cut energy use, reduce bills and even spot heat loss using thermal imaging — all while getting to know the people on your street a little better.

From environmental action to business ideas, from walking boots to food waste caddies, it's clear that Dacorum is full of people making small changes that add up to something much bigger. Find out about all these events at [www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk). And as the days grow longer, there's never been a better time to get involved.

Wishing everyone a joyful and peaceful Easter – time for fresh starts, brighter days and enjoying the simple pleasures of spring in our wonderful community.

### Local Contacts

#### Herts Police non-emergency 101

**Berkhamsted and Tring Safer Neighbourhood Team** 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

#### Cubs and Scouts

Jane Dawson 07759 888085

#### LM&P Village Society (The Horti).

horti@longmarston.org

#### St Cross Wilstone

Rev'd Jane Banister 01442 822170

Olga Martin 01442 822894

#### St Mary's Puttenham

Rev'd Huw Bellis 01442 822170

Churchwarden

Christine Rutter 07514 548289

#### All Saints Long Marston

Rev'd Jane Banister 01442 822170

Churchwarden Judith Weatherall

#### Long Marston Victory Hall

**Bookings:** Sara Wilmot 07778 046154

#### Long Marston Cricket Club

Paul Marsh Chairman

Chairman@longmarstoncc.co.uk

#### Long Marston Tennis Club

Longmarstontennisclub@gmail.com

**Long Marston School** 01296 668386

#### Wilstone Allotment Assn.

Steve Smith, 07753 744437

#### Wilstone Village Hall

Chairman: Peter Walker

chairman@wilstonevillagehall.org

07768 605684

**Bookings:** Peter Myrants

bookings@wilstonevillagehall.org.uk

07857 818638

info:https://wilstonevillagehall.org.uk

**WI** Clare Hill 07802 415447

#### Wilstone Community Shop

01442 891167

**Member of Parliament** Victoria Collins

victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk

#### County Councillor

Sally Symington 0300 123 7488

sally.symington@hertfordshire.gov.uk

#### Dacorum's Councillors: Tring West

Brian Patterson 01442 823868

Brian.patterson@dacorum.gov.uk

Caroline Smith-Wright 07931 733151

Caroline.smith-wright@dacorum.gov.uk

**Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.**  
[editorwlm@yahoo.com](mailto:editorwlm@yahoo.com)

### TRP Council Contacts

#### Your Parish Councillors are:

#### Chairman Nigel Fox

cldr.fox@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Vivian Wood

cldr.wood@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Richard Foster (Vice-Chairman)

cldr.foster@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Gill MacDonald (Long Marston)

cldr.macdonald@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Maria Adams

cldr.adams@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Clare Hill

cldr.hill@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Andrew Turton-Ward

#### Vacancies 1

#### Clerk to the Parish Council

Chloe Collins 07516 344248

email:

clerk@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

#### Villages Warden

Mark Smith 07919 077979

warden@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

To contact by phone, use the clerk's number: 07516 344248

# Anyone for Tennis?

By Tim Dean

Long Marston Tennis Club is having an open day on Saturday 4th April (Easter Saturday). Come along and see the fantastic Tiger Turf tennis courts we have in a lovely setting up Cheddington Lane next to the Cricket Club.

Meet some of our members and have a knock. There will be mixed play from 10am to 12pm, followed by a kids' session from 12pm until 2pm. After that it's open play till 4pm.

There will be food and drink and even an Easter egg hunt for the youngsters.

If you are a beginner, we can help you learn – if you are a match player, we can find you a spot in one of our seven Aylesbury league teams. If it's fun and friends you are after – we do that too.

We have open social tennis on a Thursday evening and a Saturday morning. So, if you can't join us on the 4th, get in touch and arrange to come along one Saturday morning ([longmarstontennisclub@gmail.com](mailto:longmarstontennisclub@gmail.com)).

Membership is great value, and, even better, if you join on the 4th, we are offering two months' membership for free.



# The Long Marston 'Make, Bake and Grow Show' Saturday 1st August

The traditional Long Marston vegetable, flower, cakes, crafts and photo competition will take place in the Village Hall this year on Saturday 1st August. So put the date in your diaries and get planting and creating. All your favourite classes will be there plus one or two new ones. More details will follow. We had a record number of Children's entries last year so we hope this will continue.

If you have any ideas that will make the hall show better, for example new categories, please message Tim Dean ([Tim.dean60@ymail.com](mailto:Tim.dean60@ymail.com)).

The "Big" Village Show on the recreation ground is planned to return next year. Although it was a great success last year, it is also a huge amount of work for everyone involved. The Village Society and the organisers believe that running it every other year will enable us to make the Big Show as good as it can be.



**Despite the hot weather the display of flowers was impressive last year**

# The Mayor's Walk: Shrove Tuesday

By Cllr Caroline Smith-Wright

Community spirit has certainly been on display in recent weeks. The Mayor's Boundary Walk has seen residents come together in all weathers across the borough. From pancake tossing in Puttenham to trudging through the wet fields to Tring and then up the Wigginton hill, showing just how strong and supportive our local networks can be.

Dacorum's Mayor Catherine McAreyve said, "Whether residents, groups and communities joined me to walk 1 mile or 10 miles, everyone was part of something special. Not only did we raise money together for local charities. Beyond the camaraderie, it was also a reminder of the simple benefits of walking for our health and how it lifts our mood and gives us much-needed thinking time. Thank you to all of you who supported me. I really think we have an amazing borough full of wonderful people and organisations and am so proud of you all."

