

Village news

February 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

Wilstone pensioners enjoy Christmas lunch with entertainment and games.

by Colin Davenport



In the early part of December, the Wilstone Community Shop in conjunction with the Wilstone Village Hall organised a Christmas lunch for some of the local pensioners.

Organised by Gail Short and assisted by many helpers from the shop's volunteers, a splendid lunch time was arranged. It started with the ladies of the "Keep Going Choir" serenading the guests with many of the traditional Christmas carols ably conducted by Anna Swanell, whilst the audience were kept quiet with large quantities of wine or soft drinks.

The meal started with all the traditional ingredients, turkey etc., served up by many of the willing volunteers, followed by Christmas pudding, pavlova or trifle, or some of each one in some instances (no names). Coffee was served with mince pies or shortbread whilst the 6-piece ukulele band played on with great enthusiasm, much to the enjoyment of the listeners.

To keep the party going, a *pass the parcel* was played to great amusement, and all too soon it was all over and time to go home, leaving the volunteers to clear up and wash up.

My thanks to ALL who helped put on this lunchtime and in particular to GAIL, who was the main organiser of the whole event.

Well done, and thank you.

For the residents of Puttenham, Astrope, Long Marston, Gubblecote, Wilstone & Little Tring.

More pictures from the Christmas lunch



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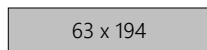
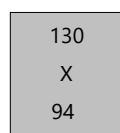
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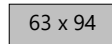
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Medium 1/4 page



Small 1/8 page



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 March edition is Caroline Clist and the deadline for items is:

Wed 11 February 2026.

Firstly, on behalf of the Village News team, I would like to wish a Happy New Year to all our readers, contributors and advertisers.

I think we have had quite a good year with a mix of stories and reports. We always like to see new contributors, and we would welcome more from our younger readers.

This month we have a new contributor who is planning to write a memoir about growing up in Wilstone during the 1950s. His first article is about his memories of Wilstone School. Equally, we would welcome some feedback about what you like or maybe dislike in the magazine.

We aim to keep you updated about what is happening in our villages and hamlets, but to a large extent we rely on you to tell us what is going on.

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me

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What's on in & around our villages

Diary Dates

Wilstone Film Nights

Fridays
20th February
20th March
17th April
at Wilstone Village Hall
7.15pm

Sunday J14 June

Wilstone Fete

A note for your diary: **Wilstone Village Fete and Fun Dog Show**

Our free biennial village event will be held on the recreation ground and at the village hall on **Sunday June 14th**.

If you would like to participate on the day or help create the event, please drop a note to

chairman@wilstonevillagehall.org.uk

Tring Rural Parish Council

Meeting start at 7.30pm The public are welcome to attend

Wednesday 28 January Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me



Church Services

Below is a list of the Services for the Village churches for Februaryuary – **these 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](#)

Sun 1 February – The Presentation in the temple

6pm – Celtic Prayer – All Saints, Long Marston

Tues 3 February

10am – Holy Communion -St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 8 February – 2 Before Lent

Services 8am and 10am in Tring, 10am in Aldbury

Tues 10 February

10am Morning Prayer – St Cross Wilstone

Sat 14 February

8am – Quiet Day – St Mary's, Puttenham

Sunday 15 February – Sunday before Lent

10am – Holy Communion – All Saints, Long Marston

Tuesday 17 February

10am – Holy Communion cw, St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 22 February – Lent 1

3.30pm – Evensong BCP– St Mary's Puttenham

Tuesday 24 February

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

Sunday 1 March – Lent 2

6pm – Celtic Prayer – All Saints, Long Marston



St Mary's, Puttenham



9.00 am – 2.00 pm

Church Square, Tring

Saturdays

14 & 28 February

14 & 28 March

Wilstone Film Nights



This feel-good film tells the true story of a lad who contracted Tourette's syndrome, the adversity he experienced and the love he received from unexpected quarters. Inevitably, there is strong language in this film, but at the same time, it is very, very funny!

Friday February 20th

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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Sarah Dunthorne, a much-loved Wilstonian, has sadly passed away.

She had planned her goodbyes and her funeral, and she did it her way. This was her eulogy at a packed Tring church, delivered by celebrant, Blake McAdam.



Famous births of 1958 included Madonna, Andrea Bocelli, Tim Burton, and Jamie Lee Curtis. On Monday, 13th October 1958, Carolina Moon, sung by Connie Francis, was riding high in the charts at number one, and on the 13th of October 1958, Audrey and Douglas welcomed their daughter Sarah into the world along with her elder sister Wendy. She grew up in Winchmore Hill, North London, in the family home, a place she always spoke about with genuine affection.

Her childhood was something Sarah cherished. She often talked about her dad's sense of fun, her mum's warmth, and the bond she had with her sister Wendy. The garden was a magical and adventurous place. Recreations of Swallows and Amazons in a "boat on wheels" that her dad built, or turning her mum's rockery into "Spyglass Hill."

Grandma lived with them too, and Sarah loved sharing afternoon teas with her and the cat. Family shaped her, and she knew it. She was always grateful and appreciative of the opportunities her parents provided to her.

In 1963, Sarah and her sister attended Palmers Green High School for girls. It wasn't Sarah's favourite place – she didn't have much patience for what she called "silly rules", and on balmy, sunny summer days, she would toss her straw boater aside in favour of a bottle of suntan oil and skip off to sunbathe. Palmer's Green was also where she met one of her closest friends, Frances. They shared a friendship that would last over 60 years. Only a few years ago, they finally saw Diana Ross together, fulfilling a teenage dream.

After finishing her 'O' Levels, her dad let her choose a holiday. She chose Ibiza for the sunbathing, while Wendy and her mum booked their own trip to Spain for the art galleries. Sarah and her dad had a brilliant time together – easy company and shared interests.

From the age of eleven, Sarah had decided she wanted to work in hotels. After leaving school, she passed her diploma in hotel reception and worked on the front desk at the Grand Metropolitan Hotel in St James's Park, London. She enjoyed the job and was even entered into the Miss Grand Metropolitan Hotels beauty contest.

In 1981, she married David. They moved to Cheshunt, and their marriage welcomed a daughter, Laura, in 1986, and a son, Adam, in 1991. Being a mum mattered deeply to her, and she devoted herself entirely to Laura and Adam. When the marriage ended in 1996, she focused on keeping life steady for the children.

During the children's primary school years, she met Delia and David, who became close friends, as well as some guy named Steve. She and Steve 'got on' immediately—they shared a similar sense of humour and loved talking about everything. In 1997, Steve moved in, and when he transferred to long-haul with British Airways, Sarah's love of travel certainly "took off".

They travelled all over the world together. In those days, the cockpit door on aeroplanes wasn't locked as it is now; Steve recalls Sarah, on many occasions, sneaking into the flight deck in the middle of the night while flying over the vast oceans, secretly sitting behind him and tickling the back of his neck. (At least he thinks it was Sarah!) It was a different era.

When he was rostered trips over Christmas, Laura, Adam and Craig occasionally came too, giving the family some memorable Christmases abroad. Relatives travelling with the crew are always affectionately referred to as 'cling-ons'.

The year 2010 marked the start of one of the most significant changes in Sarah and Steve's lives when they moved to Wilstone, a rural community that welcomed them warmly and where they found much happiness. Many wonderful new friendships were made, and they had many brilliant times, especially at the Half Moon Pub.



In May 2013, Sarah and Steve were married at Mentmore Golf Club, just up the road from here, a day they both look back on with real fondness. The Wilstone crowd were certainly on form that day, as usual.

Happy days were intertwined with some very sad times. Sarah tragically lost her mum, dad, and sister Wendy in quick succession, along with two close cousins, which was all devastating for her.

Then more devastation: Sarah was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014. She possessed a resilience that carried her through. Friends and family helped keep her spirits up during treatment. Once she was well enough, she returned to travelling, working part-time as a receptionist at Rothschild Surgery and briefly volunteering at the village community shop in Wilstone.

Steve recalls their habit of turning left out of the Chiltern Hospital in Great Missenden, after having intravenous chemotherapy, and travelling the couple of hundred yards up the road to the Nags Head Pub for a slap-up lunch with a bottle of wine! This happened most 'chemo days', in fact. (The nurses told her 'a little wine' shouldn't be a problem).

When she turned 60, she celebrated with 80 friends and family at the village hall – proud to reach a milestone that others in her family had been denied.

Becoming a grandmother was one of the most joyous moments of her life. Luke, Chloe, Ryan, and Bella brought her great joy. She loved having the house full for Sunday lunches and Christmases, with toys everywhere and the inevitable chaos that comes with young children.

Sadly, in 2019, Sarah's cancer returned, requiring more treatment and the realisation that this time, it could only be kept at bay for a while rather than cured. This news was truly devastating. Then, in 2020, Sarah faced another tragedy when her son Adam suddenly passed away at the age of 29. But all of you know and understand just how stoic she was until the very end and how she carried on with life, always with a smile on her face.

In recent years, she consciously filled her time with activities and people that brought her comfort—friends in the village, the 'Wilstone Winos' book club (who I'm not sure have ever read an entire book from cover to cover), quilting classes, wreath-making, and Ziggy, the cat she adored. On quieter days, she sewed, read, did jigsaws, and gardened, just as she'd done with her mum. She found great peace in simple moments, especially sitting in the garden with Steve, enjoying the sunshine and a glass of wine.

Her bond with Laura was profoundly cherished, and over the past few years, they shared countless treasured moments—luxurious spa escapes, delightful dinners, annual hotel retreats to Marlow, and an abundance of warm, affectionate cuddles.

So what is her legacy? Sarah made a difference wherever she went. She was warm, straightforward, and fun to be around. She had a unique way of making people feel comfortable, and she generously gave her time and energy. Each of you will carry in your hearts precious and lasting memories of how her life touched yours. Keep those memories close and revisit them often, for they form an unbreakable link back to her, and on the days when you miss her the most, love yourselves harder, for that is what she would want.

Postscript – Held at Tring Church, Sarah's funeral was attended by 300 people, and many of them attended the interment at Wilstone Cemetery. The Canal and River Trust and Kier, the construction company working on Wilstone reservoir, helped the mourners hugely by opening up the construction site to assist parking.

At a recent Wilstone Film Night, at which Sarah was a regular attendee, the audience and the Hall Committee raised £1000 to donate to the two hospices where Sarah received care.

Scan here for Sarah's order of service



Abandoned resolutions may be a good idea.

It's the time of year when some of us have given up on New Year's resolutions; maybe you have?! Abandoned resolutions may not be a bad thing. I think we have to be careful with ourselves when making resolutions and aware of where they come from within us – do they come

from a belief that we are fundamentally lacking and that becoming thinner, better, fitter, calmer, tidier, or whatever is the only way we can become acceptable to others and to ourselves? It can be helpful to reflect on whether our resolutions might be driven by self-rejection rather than self-care. It's good to want to be the best we can, but, paradoxically, we can only grow when we accept ourselves in the first place. I mentioned all this in church the other day before confession because confession is sometimes seen as the bit in the service to make us feel guilty and down on ourselves. But that's not the idea. We might well

have been thoughtless or ungenerous or whatever, and it's good to bring that before God and to repent. Confession is about that, but then it's about accepting that we're forgiven, that we are loved, that we are free. God's forgiveness is freely given as a gift for us to accept. And then, however unsteadily, we can move forward in that freedom and grow.

As a sign of this sweet gift of divine forgiveness, we shared gold chocolate coins in church after confession. You might like to find something similar to enjoy as you give thanks for and celebrate God's loving forgiveness!

Friends... Who needs them?

Quiet Day, 14th February, Puttenham Church.

My friendships are a crucial and life-giving part of my life, and I hope yours are too. Whether we have many or few friends, this quiet day offers time to reflect on the gift of friendship. The Reverend Deborah Snowball will lead the day, and all are welcome for a short time or for the whole thing. 9.30am - 4pm, with Communion at midday followed by lunch. Please book, especially if you'd like to come for a meal. Please ask if you'd like more details.

tringteamparish.org.uk/news





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MON-FRI 8am-2pm

SAT 8am-1pm

SUN 9am-noon

New year, new opportunities, new plans

We would like to thank you all for your excellent support throughout the festive season. We had a very successful Christmas which, as a small independent business in today's economic climate, is brilliant.

Thank you to those who purchased tickets for our Christmas hamper raffle. You raised an amazing £300 which, added to our Christmas dinner raffle, made a total of £500 which we were delighted to give to The Hospice of Saint Francis in Berkhamsted.



So, what for 2026 you may ask? Well, the beginning of a new year brings lots of plans which, with a healthy boost to our volunteer family numbers last year, we hope to be able to realise.

- We hope to arrange a community walk with refreshments after.
- We have been asked if we could open later in an afternoon to enable our school children returning home to use the shop. We therefore plan to open later on a Friday once a month to facilitate this. Keep an eye out in the shop and on our social media pages for further details.
- Once again, we will play a very active part in this year's village fete, running the tea rooms, serving cakes provided by our wonderful volunteers. This really is a whole shop family team effort!

- Last year for the first time, we had a Twilight Festive afternoon, which due to the very positive response we will be scheduling the same again this year.
- And, of course, after another very successful Christmas lunch for many members of our local community that will also feature prominently in December.

There is also some chat about the possibility of a craft club setting up, so lots to look forward to.

None of our good news story would be possible without our brilliant team of volunteers, the more the merrier!

If you would be interested in helping in any way, please do get in touch **01442 891167** or **info@wilstonecommunityshop.org**

Home Ground Café

A New Year and the first day of the year at Home Ground café was the busiest ever! The big breakfast was a big treat and a big success. Look out for further special events in the coming months.

The new year also sees the launch of our Engage an Engraving campaign. We need to raise more funds for the new terrace, which is due to be built in April. There is an opportunity to have a brick sized paver engraved. The pavers will be laid as a border around the terrace. Would you like to have a memorial for a loved one, a child or grandchild acknowledged, a faithful pet remembered or an event mentioned? Now is your chance to honour someone or something for perpetuity!

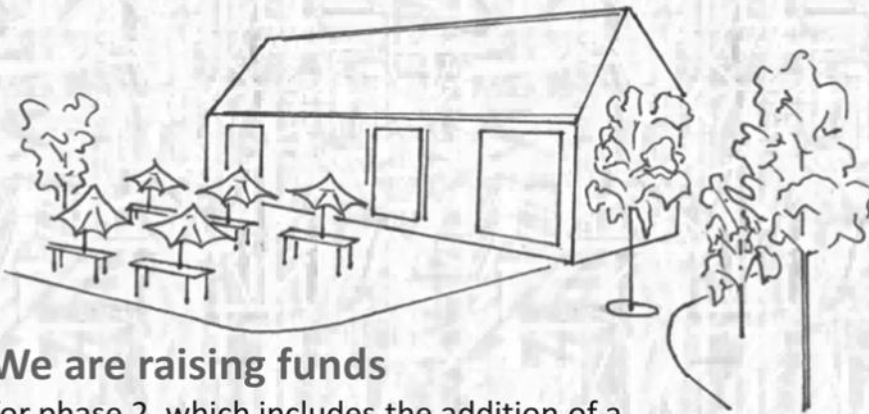
If anyone is thinking of replacing their garden furniture over the next few months then the cafe would be pleased to give your old a new home.

Please read the advertisement in this newsletter to find out how you can support the campaign.

If you are unable to use the QR code, the address is:
<https://www.tringrural-pc.gov.uk/terrace>
 or if you have any questions you can contact us by email at terrace@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

ENGAGE AN ENGRAVING

This is your opportunity to be part of the Home Ground Café success story



We are raising funds

for phase 2, which includes the addition of a paved terrace area for those sunny days meeting friends and enjoying the atmosphere. To this end, we are offering the chance to have an engraved paving brick to be embedded in the edge of the paved area.



Sponsor a paving brick

with your own personal message permanently engraved on the face. This may be simply your name, a cherished memory, or it could be a memorial for a loved one. Scan the QR code for more details, and to order.

Santa's seal of approval for festive village events

By Tin Dean

-needed support for those in our community who are struggling.

Santa also made a surprise appearance at 'Carols round the Tree' on Long Marston Village Green. What a fantastic crowd this year. Everyone was in good voice, and the band sounded great – thank you to Aidan and friends. The collection raised £336 for Help for Heroes.

A big thank you to the Horti Village Society for organising both events.

Father Christmas was delighted by his reception as he toured the villages on his sleigh. Lots of children took the opportunity to tell him what they were hoping to get for Christmas – let's hope they weren't disappointed. The elves collected £368 for local charity DENS, who were very grateful for the donation. DENS provides much



Happy Holidays

A Story of Longub Puttastone

By martin Winship

The festive season was at last over. The extremely tasteful (and expensive) decorations had been taken down and disposed of. (Prunella would never even consider using the same colour scheme, let alone the same baubles and tinsel, two years in a row). Prunella's husband had played his part throughout the annual performance with fortitude and patience. He was well practised. Every year followed more or less the same script. The agonising over choosing just the right Christmas items for decorating the house. The sudden change of mind. The desperate attempts to discover exactly what every one of Prunella's friends and neighbours was planning, and then to make sure that whatever it was, Prunella would outshine and eclipse their best efforts. The arranging of the parties for the select "chosen few", the choice of the food and wine, the music and entertainment. And of course, the almost desperate search for the perfect gifts and presents for all those important people Prunella knew she had to impress. Her husband saw to every detail and, naturally, spared no expense. He could not do otherwise. When the parties and intimate candlelit soirees, the traditional "state visit" to the carol service in the church, and the precisely timed and choreographed First-Footing had seen in the New Year to the perfectly coordinated strains of "Auld Lang Syne", it was surely time for him to relax and congratulate himself on another Yuletide successfully completed, or at any rate survived. But this was not the case. He knew his work was nowhere near done. Act two of the winter performance was about to begin, and, with the assistance of a very special old malt whisky, he steeled himself for what he knew only too well was to follow.

It was pretty much a routine now, and after years of going through the proceedings, he considered himself an old hand, albeit a reluctant one. He knew that in the middle of January, Prunella would go into a decline. She would become wistful and occasionally weepy for no obvious reasons. He further knew that his reaction was required to be worried concern, and he felt that he had the facial expressions and the tender murmurings down to a fine art. Next, Prunella would become fretful and irritable, and he knew then his role was expected to be one of guilty regret, tacitly admitting that whatever was wrong, it was of course his fault. There would follow the hints and clues, the comments on how dreary life seemed, how bleak and miserable this country was in the "deep mid-winter". (She always used this term; she no doubt relished its inherent drama and pathos). Then would come the last act in the pantomime, and as with any such production, timing was critical. Her husband had to gauge his participation precisely, neither too early, nor, heaven forbid, too late. He would delicately enquire as to what Prunella would like to do to "cheer her up". He already knew the answer; it was the same every year. A winter break; a holiday away from here; a complete change of scene. This year was no exception, though the nature of the holiday Prunella

demedanded came as a complete surprise. Nevertheless, he knew better than to question any of Prunella's decisions, and he immediately set about making all the arrangements. And in these circumstances, **all** the arrangements meant just that.

He went ahead, despite previous experiences, which had often involved the procurement of almost inevitably expensive kit, in frequently vain attempts to keep Prunella happy. One year, she had hit upon scuba diving off the Maldives as her selected choice of a restorative break. A friend of hers had been and had raved about the experience. It was not so much that Prunella envied the experience as that her friend clearly now had the edge on her – a situation she would not and could not tolerate. So her husband had booked the flights and accommodation (five-star, naturally) and had then had to see to the provision of brand new equipment. Prunella made it quite clear that under no circumstances would she even consider using a mouthpiece that someone else had already used. One never knew who or what they might have been. All had gone well until the day of the first dive, when Prunella had made the devastating discovery that the sea was inhabited by LIVE FISH, and things apparently made of JELLY, and other things that were actually distinctly WORMLIKE. The scuba gear was abandoned, and she remained obstinately by the hotel swimming pool for the rest of the holiday. On another occasion, island hopping in the Aegean Sea, on a chartered and fully crewed yacht, had been Prunella's must-do vacation, again as a result of the tales of one of her friends. It goes without saying that all the bed linen and towels on the vessel had to be changed, and even the shower curtains had to be replaced. Despite these precautions, things had not gone well. Prunella was aghast to find that the "crew", rather than the smartly uniformed and obsequious types she had fully expected, were to a man bearded, generally stripped to the waist, and had not even mastered the rudiments of polite English. After one short day in the company of these pirates, she had transferred to a luxury hotel on one of the islands and stayed there for the remainder of the cruise. Her husband had stayed on the yacht and had actually had an extremely good time of it, though he had declined to reveal much detail subsequently to Prunella.

And this time, he was confident; he had got everything right. He had risen to the challenge of Prunella's most unusual choice of a holiday and arranged everything, down to specialist clothing and sunglasses. Nothing, he felt confident, could go wrong. Indeed, all seemed to be going splendidly to begin with. They had flown first class across "the Ditch" on a direct flight to Rio de Janeiro and stayed (to Prunella's preening delight) at the Copacabana Palace. But the next day they were on their way again and had flown down to Buenos Aires, which was still quite exciting and exotic, though perhaps not as warm and inspirational as Rio. Their stop at Buenos Aires was brief. They boarded the good ship Derzkaya S'yu* and set off down the River Plate, past Montevideo and into the South Atlantic Ocean. At which point some of Prunella's *joie de vivre* started to fail. The ship, despite its fresh coat of paint and reasonable conversion, still had the look and feel of a rather ancient and decidedly battered whaler, which description also fitted the captain. He spoke only Russian but nevertheless made his approval of Prunella absolutely clear and obvious; he took every opportunity to corner her in some lonely part of the deck, where he would attempt to embrace her and breathe "Goryachiye Guby"*** in her ear. The ship, under this lusty Kapitain Puguosh***, battered its way south, and the

temperature steadily dropped. Both Prunella and her husband were grateful for the cold-weather clothing he had thoughtfully provided. One day, they found themselves ploughing through a wild channel between rugged headlands and islands. Her husband informed Prunella that this was Tierra del Fuego, though she was clearly not impressed. A few days later, she awoke to find her horizon bounded by a sparkling white wall, and her husband told her that this was the edge of Antarctica. Prunella gazed in horror at a great throng of what were unmistakably penguins, each one standing behind the most enormous and utterly disgusting beak she had ever seen.

"Why have you brought me to this awful place?" she demanded.

Her husband spread his hands. "But it's what you asked for!" he replied.

"Nonsense! How ridiculous you are!" Prunella stamped her foot.

For once, her husband did not roll over and give in. "But you did! You distinctly said you wanted AN ICE HOLIDAY!"

Prunella fluttered her eyes at the cabin ceiling. "You nincompoop! I said I wanted A NICE HOLIDAY! Oh, how I wish I had listened to my mother!"

Her husband sank, as though he had developed a slow puncture. He too often wished Prunella *had* listened to her mother. It would have saved a good deal of trouble and expense.



Saucy Sue *Hot Lips * Captain Pugwash**

Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 195

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

Solution on page 21

VOLUNTEERING VACANCY



TREASURER

required for
Wilstone Community Shop

If you're good with money and have a background in book-keeping, the shop is looking for someone like you to take over the role of treasurer.

Formal accountancy qualifications are not required - handover training will be provided - but they would help if you do have them.

The work includes monthly and quarterly maintenance of the books through the year and the statutory preparation and submission of the annual accounts to HMRC.

If you would like to support the community shop in this crucial role or want more information, please call into the shop or contact:

Diana.Crapnell@btinternet.com 01442 891167
www.wilstonecommunityshop.org.uk

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From our Reporter at the council meeting

The last TRPC meeting of 2025 was held at Long Marston on December 3rd.

Unsung hero

Chair Cllr Fox began the meeting by expressing a huge debt of gratitude to Colin Reedman for his 38 years of service as Village Warden.

Budget blues

Clerk Chloe has been working with Cllr Fox and Malcolm Morgan on the projected budget for 2026-27

Mr Reedman's work around the parish included emptying the recreation ground bins, managing the interments at Wilstone cemetery, and looking out for signs of vandalism. The sort of tasks that might go unnoticed but are essential in showing our villages are cared for and keeping our community a pleasant place in which to live. Thank you, Mr Reedman!

As mentioned at previous meetings, Dacorum Borough Council were consulting on phasing out the grants for the Village Warden and Concurrent Services, such as grass cutting. The decision was to have been taken at the Dacorum 'cabinet' meeting the evening before, so the result wasn't known at the time of the TRPC meeting. The TRPC's view is that grass cutting, bin emptying, and the safety of children's play areas are not just 'nice to have' services: they are essential. Although the litter bins in the lay-bys of the A41 bypass have been removed and replaced with 'Take your litter home' signs, this wasn't the route the TRPC wanted to go down.

There is also an issue with the speed indicator devices that the TRPC worked so hard to get. It appears that the Police and Crime Commissioner will **not** pay for their maintenance (£1000 each), and Herts County Council will only pay for them until they break down, after which they will be removed.

The only way the TRPC can see of maintaining these services is to increase the Parish precept part of the Council Tax by about £26 per household. As the clerk pointed out, the TRPC can't generate money by any other means. Cllr. Fox emphasised that Dacorum is phasing out the support that it is giving to parishes.

Any precept increase would also cover a slight increase to the clerk's and warden's hours, as well as adding work to the warden's role, such as building and footpath maintenance and cleaning the village gates.

Village views

Cllr Fox advised that HORTI have asked to install a 20 ft green container on Long Marston's recreation ground for the storage of the village show (and other) equipment. Cllr Foster pointed out that planning permission may be required, as well as liability insurance and other agreements. Further enquiries would be made.

Cllr Adams reported that Wilstone residents are asking for 20 mph speed limits and traffic calming measures in the village, as the volume of through traffic is a problem. Cllr Fox said that Herts Highways needs to carry out speed surveys and volume studies, but that Luke Gibbons of Highways has stated there is no money in their budget for this. However, it was suggested that involving Cllr Sally Symington and MP Victoria Collins might help.

Cllr Macdonald stated that the running costs for Long Marston's Victory Hall have risen by 36% and that phase 1 of the redecoration was almost complete. Phase 2 – works to the rear extension and the old boiler room, a side extension and a committee room – was being planned, thanks to a significant bequest from the late Toby Davidson.

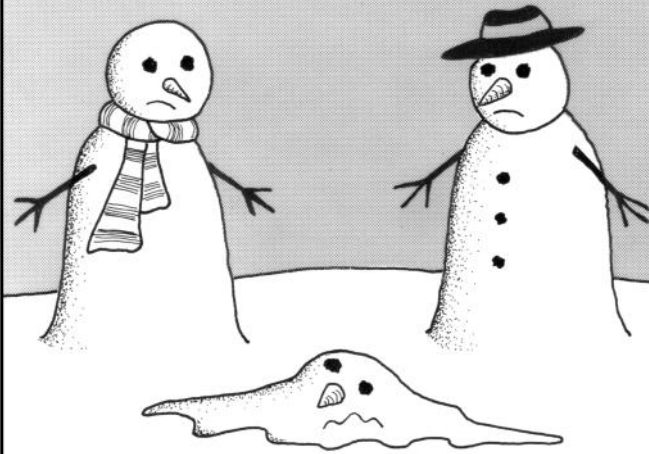
Cllr Macdonald, Flood Working Party chair James, Cllr Sally Symington and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) had met with the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT). Disappointingly, the CRT did not accept that their releasing canal water into Ashen Brook meant that they had to keep it clear – they feel this is the landowner's responsibility!

Cllr Foster reported that Home Ground Cafe is doing well and that fundraising for the terracing has started. Six native trees have been planted so far, and it was hoped to landscape the wider area. Planning permission for a sign next to the postbox had been granted.

Date of next meeting: 29th January 2026, 7.30pm, Home Ground Cafe, Long Marston.

Inklings by Steve Thompson

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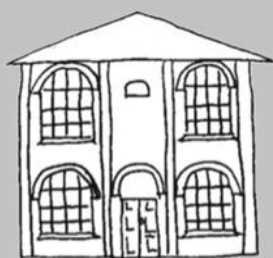
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Remembering Wilstone School in the 1950s

by Alan Reason

My name is Alan Reason. I was born in Wilstone in 1947 and lived there for sixteen years until 1963. Most of the buildings I knew as a child still exist, even if now put to different uses. However, one Wilstone village building that has disappeared – and one I remember very well – was the village school.

I started at Wilstone village school in 1952 at age 4. My mum had gone to the same school in the mid 1920's, leaving at age 14 as was normal back then. It had not changed very much since Mum's time. It was a very solid brick building from the 1800s which included teacher accommodation. There were two classrooms and an entrance hall/cloakroom. Separate boys' and girls' toilets were on the edge of the large asphalt-surfaced playground.

Wilstone School had less than 30 children in the early 1950s, meaning there were only about four or five children for each year, girls and boys. Some of the children I remember from the first few years at school are Michael Bishop, David Brackley, Eileen Cook, Kenny Dover, Lois Edwards, Martin Hill, Dennis Horne, Judy Kimber, Stuart Milton, Keith Pegg and Michael Robinson. Older than me and leaving to go to Mortimer Hill School in Tring at age 11, I remember Linda Bishop, Andy Edmunds, Arthur Horne, Rex Jeffrey and his brother Colin, and Sandra Reeves. Some of the village's more affluent children went to private schools. My friend Gerald Wilkins went to Osmington School in Tring, for example.

There were two teachers at the school: Mr Bromhead and his wife. Mr Bromhead taught the older children while his wife taught the younger ones for three or four years before passing them along to her husband in the senior class. To a 4-year-old, Mrs Bromhead was a very daunting woman. However, she did teach me the 3Rs. In passing let me say that I am not aware of anyone who left Wilstone school unable to read or write. The playground was used for PE and maypole and other forms of country dancing. We often played rounders.

At about the same time as I progressed from the junior form to the seniors, Mrs Bromhead left the school and was replaced by Mrs Silson. Mrs Silson and her husband took over the accommodation at the school. Mr Bromhead and his wife moved to Buckland. Mr Bromhead began coming

to school each day on a motorcycle.

The size of the class and the fact that a few new members arrived from the juniors each year while a few left for secondary school meant that rather than getting four or five years of teaching, each child got one year of teaching repeated four or five times.

Break times were spent in the playground. Some of the games I remember included: cowboys and indians, doctors and nurses, tag, What's the Time Mr Wolf and 'Kiss Chase'. The latter was a mystery to me and the rules were not clear. It seemed to be more popular with some of the older girls. Younger boys tended to play football or cricket. No girls were allowed. There were sometimes fights in the playground. I was involved in some of them.

There was a certain amount of bullying of the younger boys by the older boys, which was accepted as 'normal'. There was a kind of initiation ceremony for younger ones. Some, not all, older boys would punch a boy in the midriff to cause winding. This action was presented by the older boys as an important life lesson to us not to get punched in the midriff; they were very proud of themselves.

On the more positive side, every year the school would put on a Nativity play of some kind. And there were other types of theatrical performances too. And looking back, it seems obvious that Mr Bromhead enjoyed putting on these shows. He was certainly very good at it. The children certainly had a lot of fun.

The school also arranged outings. I am not sure how often that happened. I only recall three or four. Transport was always an issue. In 1953, at age 5, the whole school and I walked the two and a half miles or so to the Regal Cinema in Tring to see "A Queen is Crowned". It was a long walk, probably my first film, but I don't think I really understood what I was looking at. It was nice to sit down, though!

Much later we visited London as a school to see Madame Tussaud's wax museum. I cannot remember how we got to London. We went to Tring Natural History Museum at least once. I think we may have walked again. I really liked that, and I particularly liked the fish on display that had been caught in Wilstone reservoir.

The challenge of passing the 11+

My mum really wanted me to pass my 11+ exam which would determine what kind of secondary school I would go to. According to my mum no one who had gone to Wilstone school had ever passed the 11+ since it was introduced in 1944 and she wanted me to be the first to do it and go to grammar school.

By about 1958 I was one of the oldest in the school. Most of the children of my age had moved away because their families had found jobs or more suitable housing further afield. My parents were concerned about my prospects of passing the 11+ exam. They felt that I needed to be with other children of my age at a bigger school to keep me grounded and to challenge me. They also were fairly clear that they felt Mr Bromhead would not be able to help me very much. In any event, it was decided that the last year of my primary education would be spent at Wigginton School rather than at Wilstone. It meant that during term time I would stay with my dad's parents in Wigginton.

That might have been expected to cause more upheaval in

my life than it was worth, but I didn't do too badly. I was made very welcome at Wigginton school and enjoyed my year there. There were over sixty children divided by age into three classes. I managed to pass my 11+ and get a place at Ashlyns School, and I also won the school class prize that year (1959). So perhaps Wilstone School and Mr Bromhead weren't so bad after all.

My mum had her wish. I had passed my 11+, the first attendee from Wilstone school to do so, but I had done it from Wigginton school. The first to pass the 11+ while still at Wilstone school was Martin Hill a couple of years later.

Wilstone School closed in 1971. In my judgement the Wilstone school I attended was a successful key part of many village community/team building activities and I was sorry to hear it had closed.

To read more about our local history, please go to <https://www.tringruralhistory.co.uk/>.

Wilstone's best ever Christmas tree!

Thanks to the generosity of the Meads Farm family, Wilstone was blessed with the biggest and best Christmas tree we have ever had. And thanks also to the Cobb family for powering the lights. And also to the tree fairies – Keith, Mark, John and Roger, who illuminated the tree despite the pouring rain.

Thanks to all for bringing so much pleasure to the village.
Peter Walker



Village Hall seeks solutions to solve Wilstone parking problems.

Peter Walker, Chairman, Wilstone Village Hall

The Village Hall Committee has applied to Dacorum Planning Dept for pre-application planning advice to extend the hall's car park. As those who live in Wilstone in the vicinity of the Hall will know, there are times when parking in the area becomes really difficult, simply due to the increase of car ownership per household in the village.

These parking difficulties impact the Village Hall in terms of its bookings revenues, because residents, unable to park near their homes, understandably utilise the hall car park instead, which creates



complaints from hall hirers whose guests are unable to park. The Hall and the residents have had good cooperation to meet each other's needs. However, the problem of inadequate parking is getting worse, and there is little chance of any improvement in the foreseeable future unless we find alternative solutions.

It would be a reasonable argument to say that parking in the village is not the village hall's problem and that the hall could introduce measures to stop residents parking on that land. However, if such measures were introduced, it would exacerbate the parking problems down the Long Row and in Grange Road and would simply cause other issues elsewhere in the village. We may complain about the extent to which parked cars have taken over our villages. However, most of us have them, and we all have to park somewhere. The Hall Committee serves the community and feels a responsibility to help the community to find a solution.

The Hall Committee has decided to explore potential solutions with Dacorum Planning and with TRPC, and the current proposal is to utilise part of the recreation ground for use as parking, but by exception. To explain further, a piece of land adjacent to the scout hut and hall storage shed, covered with grasscrete (which allows grass to grow through it, disguising the visual impact), would be specially opened for events when more parking was required. At other times, parking on this extension would be prevented.

The Committee have applied for a pre-application planning discussion with Dacorum to explore all the issues before we invest money in progressing the idea. If the outcome of that pre-app encourages us to go further, then more detailed planning will be required and there would be a public discussion to gather your views and suggestions.

In the meantime, your views would be most welcome to Peter Walker chairman@wilstonevillagehall.org.uk

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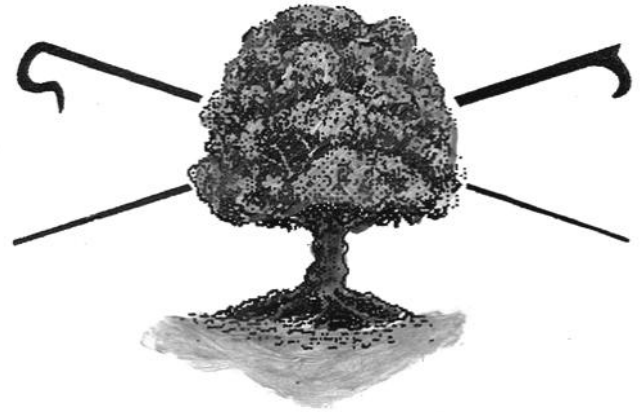
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The Puttenham Page

by Christine Rutter

Welcome to 2026

During these cold and inhospitable winter months, we shall take a break from our gatherings and fundraising activities. However, once we can say goodbye to GMT and move into British Summer Time, we shall be raring to go.

While we wrestle with dates, look out for details of the Spring Jumble Sale and a Springtime Cecilia Tea Rooms. The Tea Rooms were a little disappointing in attendance last year, causing some cancellations. We need to hear from you

Do you still like the Tea Rooms? Would you prefer that it changed to another day other than Friday? Please respond by email if you have been a past attendee.

We usually hold three Tea Rooms in the year: spring, summer and autumn.

Christine.rutter2@gmail.com

Then we have the two Jumble Sales – Spring and Autumn. In fact, some jumble has already arrived in anticipation!

Please don't forget that the church is open for a **Coffee Morning every Thursday from 10.30 until 12 noon**. It would be lovely to see more people willing to come for a face-to-face chat rather than on our social media chat, although this can be very useful at times.

There is an **Evensong Service at St.Mary's every 4th Sunday** followed by tea and cakes. This is a lovely traditional service, so please give it a try if you are not already a regular attendee.

We also hold **Quiet Days** at regular intervals during the year. These usually consist of a welcome cup of coffee, a short talk, then often a mini service in St.Mary's before we break for a soup lunch. The homemade soups and bread are highly recommended! Another short talk/discussion or free time before an afternoon cup of tea and refreshments before going home. It is a very unhurried and peaceful day in which to unwind after the preceding week. Our first one this year will be on **Saturday, 14th February**, and we shall be welcoming back the Revd Deborah Snowball. A lady of many talents over the years.

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Religion isn't the topic, as some people expect. It's just a light-hearted and enjoyable time.

It's always a great time to relax and mingle with those present and have conversations about whatever comes into your head.

I believe it's so important to keep Wilstone the friendly place it is, and we who have lived in it for years know that. And more importantly, build up solid friendly relationships which will benefit all who reside here.

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Please contact Colin Moore 01442 826976 for further information.

Village News may not be able to continue beyond 2026 if we are unable to fill these vital roles!

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editorwlm@yahoo.com

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TRPCCouncillor@gmail.com

Vivian Wood

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Long Marston School report

by Laura Whateley

This week marks a significant moment in the history of Long Marston School. On 30th January 1942, a bomb fell on the school, as described in an article from the school magazine. Tragically, the infant teacher, Mrs Whelan, lost her life in the incident.

Following this event, the school was rebuilt on a different site, as can be seen in a photograph taken in 1967. The only part remaining from the original school building is a black metal gate which we now use as the access gate to our boiler room, which can be seen from the front of the school. This important chapter of our history forms part of our curriculum and is shared with children when they learn about World War Two and during worship. We are lucky to have copies of Scoop, the magazine written by children, which provides plenty of firsthand accounts from the time.

If you are interested in learning more about local history, this website

(www.tringruralhistory.co.uk) contains further fascinating information and accounts.

SCOOP

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THE END OF LONG MARSTON SCHOOL.

The following accounts have been given by children who were on the spot immediately after (Ed.)

About half past five on January the 30th, I was walking down the village to take a message. When I was near Mrs Evans' house, Philip Shurvell said that there was a Jerry coming over, I heard the plane too but I didn't take any notice because I thought it was one of ours.

It was a quiet day, and the clouds were very low so I could not see the aeroplane. I was looking up when all of a sudden I heard a whistle and a deafening crash. I lay in the nearest ditch, because it seemed like the bomb had dropped behind Mrs Rumble's house. There was smoke and bits of shrapnel, it looked just like a train letting out a lot of smoke. I lay in the ditch a little while in case anything else should happen. When all was quiet again I did not finish my message but went home. My mother was waiting at the front door, I told her what I had seen and she said that she thought it was an aeroplane coming down.

Soon after, the fire squad were down the village, Mr Chandler our next door neighbour told us that it was the school that had been hit and it was demolished, when I heard this it made me feel very upset, I think that our old school had been bombed. I felt like I wanted to see what had happened, but my mother went down with a lot more people.

There were the fire squad, the A.R.P. and lots more people working as hard as they could to get the people out which were lying helpless under the wreckage. The people were, Mrs Whelan our Infant school teacher, and a man and lady who were living with her. The bomb had hit the water main and it had caused water to run out all over the road ankle deep. The people were out nearly all night digging away to get the people out, and some Airfield men came in lorries to help.

While this was happening Mrs Funge came up to our house because her house had been rendered unsafe.

The man and lady were taken to hospital but when they got Mrs Whelan out she was dead, so they took her to a mortuary. She was buried at Puttenham church on the following Wednesday.

The next morning there was deep water across the road and we put stepping stones across to the other side. The front of "The Boot" had been knocked down. Mr Dean's shop was coming down and all the row had been shaken about.

On Sunday there were many cars lined up to see the damage.

By Winnie Thompson Age 13.



Long Marston - 21st June 1967

Mince pies and mulled wine herald the start of the Christmas festivities at Wilstone's Community Shop.

On Thursday 27 November, the village shop welcomed visitors between the hours of 3pm and 6pm for the first time since the shop's total refurbishment five years ago. The Christmas twilight event was very well attended, and customers could buy gifts from a wide range of products that have been specially bought in, many of them handcrafted. In addition to mince pies and mulled wine, there were some excellent homemade sausage rolls and all the usual food items that the shop sells throughout the year. There was also a raffle with the proceeds going to support the Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted.

Village resident Jill Walker was invited to sell her St Eval scented candles – here's her report on the afternoon's activities:

'I was delighted to be invited to this fabulous event and to see the shop buzzing, full of customers and volunteers, all enjoying this lovely festive occasion.

I had a very busy few hours selling my St Eval candles. Thank you to everyone who supported me and the shop. I personally appreciated being included in this fun event, and I hope I helped in kicking off the festive shopping season. Thank you, everyone. Jill Walker'

As always with the shop, this event couldn't have happened without the untiring support of some of our team of excellent volunteers – Diana, Gail, Sue and Deb, and Ali the manager, who all willingly gave up their time so residents could enjoy this fitting foretaste of the festive season.

