

# Village news

November 2025

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

## Long Marston Home Ground Cafe An outstanding success!

by Sue Foster

Home Ground Café in Long Marston has now been open for 10 weeks and it has clearly become a hit with local residents, old friends, walkers and cyclists from far and wide. A place to meet old friends, a place to bump into people from the village, a place to work or simply to while away some time sitting outside in sun or tucked away in the cosy interior.

It is also an opportunity to get involved. Perhaps displaying your art or volunteering to help for a few hours. It could also be a useful service for youngsters taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. It's a great place for the young and the old to meet new people.

Rather than tell you what I think I have included some of the comments received since the café opened. These are shown on Page 13 and are well worth a look.

All of this can be summarised in one sentence:

**The café has been  
TRANSFORMATIONAL for  
the village.**



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

# Your MP Report

## Winter Energy Bills

### Supporting you with rising costs

#### Victoria Collins MP

As it gets colder, many families across Long Marston, Wilstone, Puttenham face the daunting prospect of soaring energy bills. Constituents are telling me about the immense pressure these costs place on household budgets, forcing difficult choices between heating and other essentials.

The reality is stark: energy costs show no signs of decreasing across the UK. Whilst the Government announced an expansion to the Warm Home Discount in June 2025, extending £150 rebates to 2.7 million additional households next winter, this barely scratches the surface of the crisis we face. The latest Department for Energy Security and Net Zero statistics estimated that 11% of households in England lived in fuel poverty in 2024, with projections suggesting this figure will climb even higher in 2025.

Though I welcome any attempt to relieve pressure on soaring household bills, the Warm Home Discount offers only a temporary lifeline, and leaves middle-income households that do not meet the requirements struggling. A one-off £150 payment cannot address the underlying problem of relentlessly rising energy bills that keep families awake at night worrying about staying warm.

That's why I recently challenged the Government directly, asking whether they will commit to providing a lasting solution to fuel poverty across the UK. We need an emergency 10-year home upgrade programme with

meaningful incentives for upgrading energy sources. Liberal Democrats have also called to halve the price of energy by breaking the link between the cost of electricity and the price of gas

I have repeatedly held the Government to account, both in the chamber and through tabled questions, asking what fiscal steps they are taking to support households in Harpenden & Berkhamsted with their energy bills. I've also highlighted how high energy costs put strain on rural businesses, threatening the backbone of our local economy. I remain absolutely committed to fighting for affordable energy for every household in Long Marston, Wilstone, Puttenham. No one should face the impossible choice



**Victoria Collins MP in consultation**

between heating their home and putting food on the table.

If you're struggling with energy costs or have concerns you'd like to raise, please don't hesitate to contact me

[victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk) Together, we can push for the long-term solutions our community deserves.



**Steam train spotted by Mark Fowler. at the Mill in Wilstone, using water from the little stream.**



**Editor this month: John McCall**

Editors: Caroline Clist, John McCall, Colin Moore

Managing Editor Colin Moore.

40 Tring Road Wilstone HP23 4PB

Phone: 01442 826976

Finance :Keith Fox 01442 825846

Distribution : John Taylor 07940 206056

Advertising: Amanda Russell 07444 747010

To submit an item for publication please send to

**editorwllmp@yahoo.com**

or 40 Tring Road Wilstone HP23 4PB

**To advertise in Village News please contact**

Amanda Russell 07444 747010 or send your

enquiry/artwork to:

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130
X
94

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267
X
94

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130 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 December edition is Colin Moore and the deadline for items is: Wed 12 November.**

*October, baptize me with leaves! Swaddle me in corduroy and nurse me with split pea soup. October, tuck tiny candy bars in my pocket and carve my smile into a thousand pumpkins \**

I guess this means that Autumn has arrived. Shorts are out and trousers in (unless of course you are a postman!)

The one truly spectacular thing at the moment is the amazing colours nature is showing us as the leaves on the trees are displaying such a range of golden brown hues.

On a more practical note there are adverts in this edition pleading for volunteers. The village shop in Wilstone, which plays such a key part of the community, desperately needs someone to act as treasurer. Not an onerous task if you possess a degree of numeracy.

In addition this magazine also need volunteers, both as advertising manager and as editors. Both are relatively simple roles not requiring an enormous amount of time.

Do please put yourself forward if you want to help in maintaining the community spirit of the Villages

*\*The quote is from the American author Rainbow Rowell*

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 & around our villages

### Diary Dates

#### Wilstone Film Nights

Fridays  
21st November  
12th December  
16th January  
20th February  
20th March  
17th April  
at Wilstone Village Hall  
7.15pm

#### Friday 14th November Mead

Christmas Fair

#### Tring Farmers Market

8th November  
22nd November

#### Twilight Market

Saturday 8th November 2025, from 3-6pm, victory hall

#### AGM for Victory Hall.

Friday 28th November 2025 at 7.30pm, all welcome.

**Monday 15th** December Father Christmas visits the Villages

**Monday 22nd December** Carols round the Christmas tree Long Marston

## Tring Rural Parish Council

Meeting start at 7.30pm The public are welcome to attend

**Wednesday 3 December Long Marston Victory Hall**

## Church Services

Below is a list of the Services for the Village churches for November– **these could change so please check online** at <https://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events> or phone the Rectory on 01442 822170

We also have live streamed services online so please take a look

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov– All Saints

All Souls services at Tring and Aldbury at 4pm

6pm – Celtic Prayer – All Saints, Long Marston

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Nov – (Tues)

10am – All Souls -St Cross Wilstone

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Nov –Remembrance Sunday

10:50am – Remembrance service at Wilstone War Memorial

10am – Holy Communion followed by Remembrance service at War Memorial – All Saints, Long Marston

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Nov (Tues)

10am Morning Prayer – St Cross Wilstone

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (Sat)

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

#### 16<sup>th</sup> Nov –2 before Advent

10am – Holy Communion – All Saints, Long Marston

#### 18<sup>th</sup> Nov (Tues)

10am – Holy Communion cw, St Cross Wilstone

#### 23<sup>th</sup> Nov – Christ the King

3.30pm – Evensong BCP– St Mary's Puttenham

#### 25<sup>th</sup> Nov (Tues)

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

#### 30<sup>th</sup> Nov – Advent 1

3pm – Christingle – St Peter & St Paul's, Tring

## **MILLENNIUM EDUCATION FOUNDATION** Registered Charity No. 1077157

**Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2026, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements?**

**Are you under the age of 22? Have you lived in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone for at least three years?**

To see if you would be eligible for a grant, apply to Tring Charities' Millennium Education Foundation for information and an application form.

Website details: [www.tringcharities.co.uk/education](http://www.tringcharities.co.uk/education)

Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees  
01442 827913

Email: [info@tringcharities.co.uk](mailto:info@tringcharities.co.uk)

Please note that the closing date is **15 November 2025** to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2026.



**Closing date  
15 November**



St Mary's, Puttenham

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





**Art At Wingrave**

**December Fri 5th 6.00-9.00**  
**Sat 6th - Sun 7th 10.30-5.00**

Community Centre, Church St., Wingrave, HP22 4PE  
 Including Refreshments Cancer Research UK

### 'Art At Wingrave' 2025

Art at Wingrave is now in its sixth year is just around the corner. Look forward to joining us for a vibrant, joyful and free pre-Christmas Art Event showcasing the enthusiasm and talent of 20+ local Artists and Makers.

Whether you're an art enthusiast, a collector, someone hunting for original Christmas gifts or simply looking for inspiration, here's your chance to enjoy a festive weekend of art.

This year we're hosted by the village Community Centre, warm and welcoming for all. From the moment we open our doors on Friday evening, every corner of the space will be filled with captivating work. The Centre will be decked out for Christmas and the Bar will be open throughout the week-end.

Meet talented artists and discover a wide range of work including Ceramics; Photography; Paper Sculpture; Print Making; Textiles and Felt; Glass Art; Jewellery; Watercolour, Geometric Abstracts and Mixed Media Paintings; Furniture Design; Hand-turned Wood and the striking metal sculptures of 'Riveting Welds'.

Explore the Artwork, soak up the festive atmosphere, enjoy refreshments and find that illusive gift. **Art At Wingrave** has something for everyone! So mark the dates, bring a friend, head down Church Street and pay us a visit, we look forward to welcoming you.

**Free entry · Refreshments in aid of Cancer Research UK**

Additional parking: MacIntyre School, Leighton Road, HP22 4PA. Please display a note stating that you are attending *Art at Wingrave*.

## ST.CROSS WILSTONE ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE

A service for All Souls on Tuesday  
4th Nov. at 10am.

A short service to remember all those people who have passed away, where family and friends can record their loved ones' names on the list in church, to be read out during the service.

Sprigs of rosemary, Shakespeare's flower of remembrance, will be available in church, to be placed on the altar, or taken home after the service.

We hope you will join us for this service, and stay for refreshments.

## ST.CROSS WILSTONE Help

Several years ago St Cross was gifted a ride-on mower. The church has no storage facilities, so the mower is currently housed in a domestic garage in the village. Sadly that arrangement will not be continuing and we are now looking for a new storage facility. If anyone can help we would be extremely grateful.

Please contact Olga on 822894. Thank you.



Tring  
Christmas Festival

**SAVE THE DATE**  
 Saturday 29th November

Tring High Street & Victoria Hall  
 3.30pm - 8.30pm

Tring Together

# Allotment News

by Ashley Firmin

Readers may recall that in September's edition, I made the mistake of grumbling publicly about the lack of rain. The well was wheezing, the ground was cracking, our patience was beginning to follow suit, and our spirits were beginning to wilt in sympathy. It seems the weather gods took my comments rather personally, because almost as soon as the newsletter went out, the heavens opened. If you have been caught in a downpour, I am afraid the fault may be mine.

Back then we were rationing water like wartime tea, a pitiful allowance drawn from the well at ungodly hours. The cauliflowers and cabbages sulked and shrank, the Charlotte and King Edward potatoes emerged rather on the small side, as the sweetcorn gazed skyward in despair.

Then came the deluge. The soil, giddy with excitement, drank deeply and immediately forgot its manners, converting the beds into something between a bog and a bath. The weeds, emboldened by this sudden generosity, staged a coup and have been running the place ever since. Things have since settled somewhat, and some beds have descended into cheerful anarchy, autumn raspberries and tomatoes multiplied as if the whole business were being judged by the Royal Horticultural Society. Beetroot and kohlrabi swelled with self-importance, and the indefatigable perpetual spinach and chard continue their magnificent march into autumn. With a flourish of end-of-season determination and enterprise, extra lettuce and spring onions were planted, and have gone on to grace more than a few luncheon plates. Their sense of civic duty is exemplary.

The slugs and snails, meanwhile, have returned from their underground sabbatical looking refreshed and, for now, better-behaved. Perhaps the drought encouraged introspection, or perhaps they have simply decided to return on more civilised terms. Either way, I shall not press the point.

Elsewhere the winter cabbages are strutting about with confidence, and the Brussels sprouts are lined up smartly for Christmas. As the beds clear we are

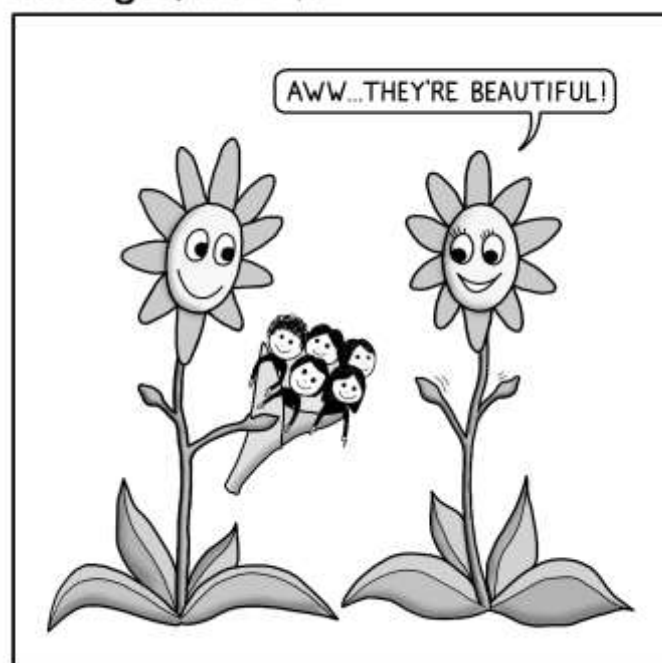
digging over, adding farmyard manure, and covering up for winter. The unmistakable scent of 'progress' now drifts cheerfully across the plots. The final task before the year's end is planting garlic and onions, which, unlike their gardener, seem positively to enjoy being cold and damp, regarding hardship, perversely, as character-building.

It has been a year of extremes, bone-dry one month, waterlogged the next, with every mood of weather in between. Yet somehow nature has balanced the books. The fruit harvest was glorious; apples, plums, pears, strawberries, blackcurrants, gooseberries, and redcurrants in heroic quantities. Jam and chutney production has reached record levels, and cupboard space now exists only in legend. Neighbours have begun to edge away politely when offered "just one more jar," and can be seen sprinting from front door to car in the mornings, lest I spring from behind a bush and deposit yet another cooking apple upon them before retreating, cackling triumphantly, into the shrubbery.

So we end the season muddy but content, smaller cabbages, livelier weeds, but plenty to smile about. Here is to next year, moderate rain, civilised slugs, and always something delicious left to spread on toast.

Many thanks to Nigel on plot 1a for providing much of the raw data and insightful analysis for this article!

**Inklings** by Steve Thompson





# TWILIGHT MARKET

## SAT 8TH NOV

FREE ENTRY

FROM 3PM-6PM



# LONG MARSTON VICTORY HALL

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VICTORY HALL

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MULLED WINE, DUTCH APPLE PIE & LIVE MUSIC...

**HORTI**  
Village Society

# Long Marston School Report

## Autumn term update

by Laura Whateley

The autumn term is well underway, and pupils at LMS have returned to school with enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards learning.

One of the highlights of the term so far has been our Harvest Festival service at All Saints' Church. The children led the service beautifully, sharing songs, readings, and prayers which reflected themes of thankfulness and generosity.

During the service, pupils also learned about the Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal, exploring how this year's focus supports communities striving towards fairness and sustainability. It was inspiring to see the children engage so thoughtfully with global issues and reflect on how they can contribute to helping others.

As we move further into the term, the school community continues to uphold our values of kindness, respect and resilience, embracing all the opportunities that this season of learning brings.

Our Year 6 pupils will once again represent the school at the village war memorial on 11th November, laying wreaths to mark Remembrance Day and to honour those who gave their lives in service.

We are also looking forward to the many festive events that mark the close of the year, including our

### Christmas Fair on Saturday 13th December in the afternoon.

We warmly invite families and friends from the villages to join us in celebrating the season together.

Long Marston VA C of E Primary School



## 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

## Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 193 moderate

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

Solution on page 12



# Wilstone Film Nights



## MR. BURTON

**The dramatic story of actor Richard Burton's formative years in a Welsh mining village.**

**Mr Burton** stars Harry Lawtey as a young Burton and Toby Jones as teacher Philip Burton who took the actor under his wing after spotting his talent for drama. Burton, who died in 1984, aged 58, starred in Hollywood blockbuster Cleopatra, and was known for his powerful performances in Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood and Shakespearean stage roles. The film tells the true story of wayward schoolboy Richard Jenkins, born in Pontrhydyfen in the Afan Valley, Neath, Port Talbot, in 1925. Burton's father Richard Jenkins was a miner and the film delves into the pressures his family faced as he was growing up. His talent for drama catches the attention of his teacher, Philip Burton, played by Bafta winner and fantastic actor, Toby Jones.



Scan code for trailers

### Friday November 21st

At Wilstone Village Hall. Doors open at 7.15pm.

Film starts at 8pm. Licenced bar.

Tickets £7.50 from Wilstone Community Shop.

12



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www.wilstonecommunityshop.org.uk



**WE'RE OPEN:**

MON-FRI 8am-2pm

SAT 8am-1pm

SUN 9am-noon

## It's Christmas time, it's turkey time - get your orders in early!

Get organised for Christmas with

### Wilstone Community Shop

**We can pre-order many essential food items  
to help you plan for the big day**

Open Christmas Eve for timed turkey collections.

No need to queue or wait, we have perfected our system  
to ensure speedy pick-ups for our customers.

If you want a goose or duck please ensure you place  
your order as soon as possible as there is limited  
availability and they tend to sell out extremely quickly.

#### Christmas opening hours:

Christmas Eve: 7.30am – 2pm

#### Turkey collections

Christmas Day: Closed

Boxing Day: Closed

Sat 27 Dec: 8am – 1pm

Sun 28 Dec: 9am – 12pm

Mon 29 Dec: 9am – 12pm

Tue 30 Dec: 9am – 12pm

Wed 31 Dec: 9am – 12pm

New Year's Day: Closed

Fri 2 Jan: 8am – 2pm  
back to normal hours



#### We can supply:

- Geese
- Turkeys
- Ducks
- Ham
- Cheese
- Christmas cakes
- Christmas puddings  
(nut/gluten free available)
- Hampers
- Local produce including  
juice and jams
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- Christmas Cards
- Decorations

**Last orders by:  
Friday 19 December**

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## The Half Moon



*Wilstone*

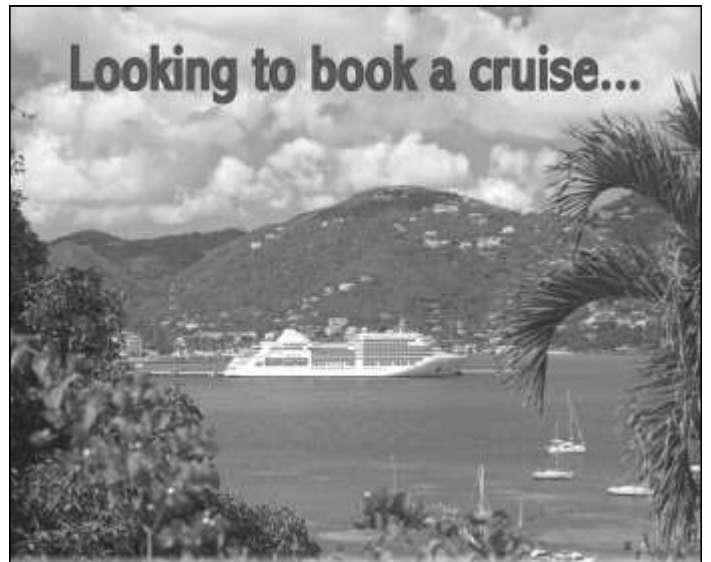
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# From the Vicarage

## Introducing "Forest Church"

by the Reverent Michelle Grace

### Why Forest Church?

Lots of people say they feel closer to God or to a sense of the spiritual while spending time in nature. Forest Church engages with this and connection with the natural world is a core part of its gathering. It is not just indoor church moved outdoors!

### What is Forest Church?

Forest Church is designed to be all age and everyone is warmly welcome. The sessions will last around 40 minutes, with additional time to share some food and drink.

In November we will be thinking about trees and so our snacks will be made from things that grow on trees!

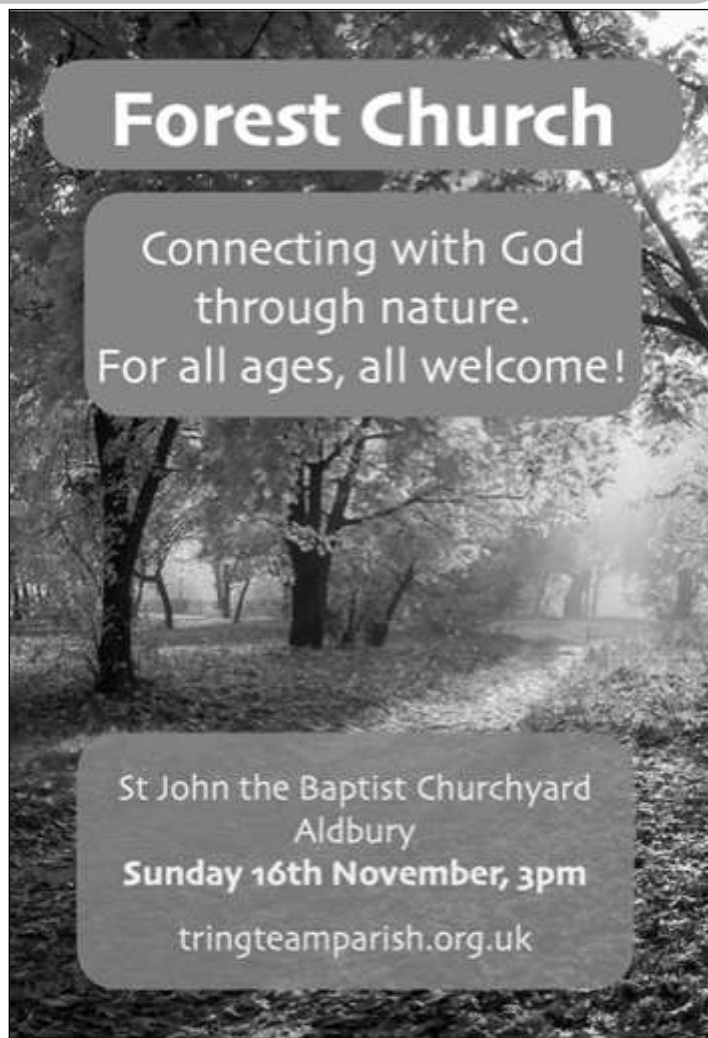
Each session will include activities in the churchyard, some individual, some communal, and there is always the option to sit alone in the churchyard for some or all of the time and simply reflect if that is what is most helpful for you that day.

Celtic spirituality refers to nature as the 'big book': the gift of creation as an important way of connecting with and learning about God. Forest Church leans into this and celebrates physicality as an important part of spirituality - being outdoors, exploring, touching, and interacting with the natural world. We will think about the cycle of the seasons, the plants, trees and creatures that we see, where our food comes from, and what all of this offers to us and prompts us to reflect on.

Connection is a good word to summarise what Forest Church is about - connection with body, mind and soul; connection between us and God; connection between us and nature; and connection with one another in community.

Unless there is a blizzard Forest Church will be outside!

Forest Church is in Aldbury but the invitation to join in is to everyone in the surrounding area. All are warmly welcome and I look forward to seeing you there.



### When and where is it?

**Sunday 16th November at 3pm, in Aldbury Churchyard.**

**Sunday 4th January, same time, same place.**



### New extended hours

**Saturdays 9.00am—2pm**


**Church Square, Tring**

**8 and 22 November 6 and 20 December.**

### Solution No 193

4	2	5	8	3	1	7	6	9
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## CHRISTMAS FOOD FAIR

We welcome you to our annual food fair, for an evening of food, drink and celebrating all our Local Producers!

**FRIDAY 14TH NOVEMBER**  
6 - 9 PM

#SHOPLOCAL



**THE TYRE CHANGERS**

## OUR NEW TYRE CHANGERS BASE IS OPEN

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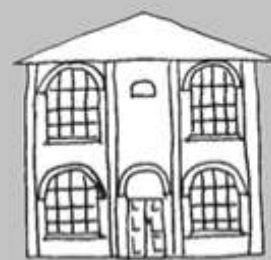
**Do you need new tyres, or have a puncture?**  
Please let us know and we will be happy to quote and make an appointment.

**Not sure of the condition of your tyres?**  
We can have a look for you, just get in touch.

**Wheel swap needed?**  
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- ◊ GCSE Maths
- ◊ GCSE English

For more information contact Aidan Scahill

Phone Numbers:

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## Update on Wilstone reservoir strengthening Works

The extraordinary piling work to strengthen the reservoir embankments has been completed. The huge cranes which lifted the 2000, two-ton, 11 metre steel piles into place, have now been removed.

The piles were silently pushed into the embankment using specialised vibrating equipment. In the photo shown, you can just see the very top of the piles on the embankment. These will be covered over when a new path around the reservoir is laid..

By the time you read this, the road next to Wilstone Reservoir car park will have partially re-opened with one lane closed and traffic lights in place while work continues. These restrictions are likely to be in place until ends of November 2025.

Wilstone Reservoir car park will remain closed while work continues to level and resurface the footpath that runs along the top of the reservoir embankment, and the steps leading to the footpath from the car park will also be replaced. The car park is scheduled to re-open by March 2026.

The collector drains at the toe of the reservoir embankment are also going to be upgraded. These drains monitor any signs that the reservoir is leaking. And we'll be carrying out work underground to repair and re-line the 200-year culvert that is still used to draw off water from the reservoir in emergencies. This 300-metre-long brick lined structure runs from the northeast corner of the reservoir down and beneath Lower Icknield Way.

The whole project is currently on track to be completed by the end of March 2026.

Update provided by Peter Walker using information from the Canal and Rover Trust.



## Home Ground Cafe (from Page 1)

### A collection of comments since the opening

**Lisa Hurley** - I love volunteering at New Ground Cafe. It's a very welcoming, happy and friendly environment to be in. I help for 2-3 hours per week serving the delicious lunches and cakes. I get to chat to so many different local people. It's been lovely finding out who our neighbours are and listening to their stories of living in the village. I have had such positive feedback from so many people enjoying the social space that it has created.

**Joan Dean** - A really welcome addition to the village, which thoroughly deserves our support. If we don't use it, we will lose it.

**Liz Young** - The cafe is such a wonderful addition to the village. I have heard nothing but praise for it and have dropped in for a quick lunch with friends three times. The menu of homemade dishes is very tempting. I had difficulty in choosing between something savoury or going for a large slice of one of the exotic cakes with coffee. I have sampled soup and a huge sausage roll and twice had delicious quiche and salad. The service could not be friendlier and I think the prices are very reasonable.

**Tess Declaudure** - Lovely cafe, I had my baby shower there soon after they opened in this new location and Helena and the team were very accommodating. We had a lovely afternoon tea and everyone enjoyed the food! Great location and business to support.

**Louise Cambridge** - How lucky are we to have this lovely café in the village. Fab cakes & coffee.

**Rachel McKay** - Helena and her lovely team have opened their new cafe in the nicely refurbished building behind the "Victory" village hall, Long Marston. Good bean-to-cup coffee, selection of teas, choice of cakes including Gluten Free and Dairy Free, light meals (sandwiches, toasties). A warm welcome to everyone including walkers and cyclists - groups will be very welcome. Work is still going on outside to make the grounds nicer, inside is lovely.

**Bob and Yvonne Addison** - What a great asset to the village our new coffee shop is. Always a warm and friendly welcome. Great place to meet friends for a tasty lunch or treat! It's become a regular for us, particularly for Sunday breakfast, when it can get very busy ... groups would be wise to book ahead! We really appreciate having Home Ground Café open in Long Marston.



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## From our Reporter at the council meeting

### The first TRPC meeting of autumn was held at Wilstone on October 1st.

#### Gimme, gimme, gimme!

Our S106 money back! Chair Cllr Fox has not yet had his meeting with County Cllr Symington and Luke Gibbons (Highways) to ask for the Lendon Grove S106 money to be returned to the TRPC, but is still keen to do so. At this stage he doesn't know the value of it.

#### I'm a Borough councillor, get me out of here!

Dacorum Borough Cllr Caroline Smith-Wright (formerly of the TRPC) attended the meeting to give an update on Dacorum issues. She reported that the Astrope Lane roadworks were now complete, apart from the sign for Astrope, which could be affixed on the opposite side of the one for Puttenham.

### HGV Vehicles

Cllr Smith-Wright reported that, at County level, there are major concerns about the impact of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on the villages, and that efforts are being made to protect the villages by getting the HGV satnav maps updated. It appears that it's possible to get roads shown as 'no through roads' or dead ends, so that the drivers won't even attempt to go down them. Cllr Fox added that the Ivinghoe Freight Strategy has shown an increase in HGVs travelling through the area.

### Flooding

Cllr Smith-Wright is also working on a local plan, nature recovery and flooding. The County Council are aware of the need for good flood defences for small developments. This is particularly pertinent in Tring Rural, as the appeal has been allowed for nine self-build homes in Wilstone.

### Village Warden

Then we got onto the thorny topic of the phasing out of the grants for the Warden and Concurrent Services, currently provided by Dacorum. At September's meeting Cllr Fox had reported that TRPC currently receive £14k a year. Cllr Smith-Wright responded that at this stage the phasing out of the grant is only a consultation, with the decision to be taken in December.

The issue was hotly debated! Clerk Chloe Collins pointed out that the consultation period coincided with the peak holiday period in July and August, in spite of a request last year that this period be avoided. Cllr Fox stated that it also clashed with budget-setting time, causing difficulties in knowing how much would have to be raised through the precept. Cllr Smith-Wright highlighted the difficulty that Dacorum is facing, because they receive a lot less money from the government and have to make it go round all the parishes. Each parish also uses the money differently. Cllr Foster remarked that removing the grant would be taking power and funding away from local people: we would lose the power to get the dog poop bins emptied! The Clerk asked whether TRPC should remove **all** the bins and tell people to take their litter home?! After all, that's what the Canal and Riverside Trust have done!

Eventually things simmered down a bit, but you may be asking why the Warden's grant is such a big deal? I didn't know - and I suspect many of you, dear readers, don't know either - that the rubbish and dog poop bins that adorn the recreation grounds, and other areas in the parish, are actually emptied **by the Village Warden**, who is employed by the TRPC. Mr Reedman bags everything up and then along trundles a van from Dacorum to collect the bags. This

means that when the bins are reported to be full, your very own Parish Council asks the Warden to deal with them! So, no grant - no warden. And, I suspect, a lot more dog-poop and litter left laying about! If the decision to remove the grant is approved, the only way the TRPC can see of maintaining the service would be to increase the Parish precept part of the Council Tax. Not an easy decision.

### Parks and recreation

Cllr Fox reported that Long Marston Cricket Club have applied for a grant to improve their changing facilities. The club wants to host more matches and will need more pitches. It was agreed that, as the club is an asset to the community, the TRPC should offer something. However, the size of the grant requested was far more than could be met, and there is no budget left for grants in this financial year. There followed a discussion about other potential sources of funding, with Cllr Smith-Wright advising that County Cllr Symington has a 'locality budget' and Dacorum has a 'leisure budget', which might be able to help. It was agreed that TRPC would offer a grant of £500 in the next financial year.

Cllr Foster gave an update on phase 2 of the Home Ground Cafe project, and thanked Cllr Smith-Wright for the grant. The purchase of the trees is being organised, as they need to be planted this autumn, and the raised beds are being costed. Cycle racks are being purchased as part of the 'green grant', and it needs to be decided where they are best positioned. The hedge alongside the access to the car park is also going to be trimmed back, to allow more room for pedestrians and vehicles.

Cllr Macdonald has sent a lengthy email to David Uncle (Senior Flood Risk Officer at Herts CC) about ditch dredging. As new housing developments' flood mitigation plans rely solely on local ditches, she asked how the developers intended to get the landowners to dredge or maintain them? Since the Environment Agency stopped dredging, it just doesn't get done. Cllr Fox thought this issue should be resolved at Dacorum borough or Herts County Council level. Cllr Smith-Wright suggested also writing to our MP, Victoria Collins, and said she would be following this up.

### And finally...

Watch out for the HORTI's firework display at Long Marston's recreation ground on November 1st, with Home Ground Cafe being open for the evening.

**Date of next meeting:** 4th December 2025, 7.30pm, Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.



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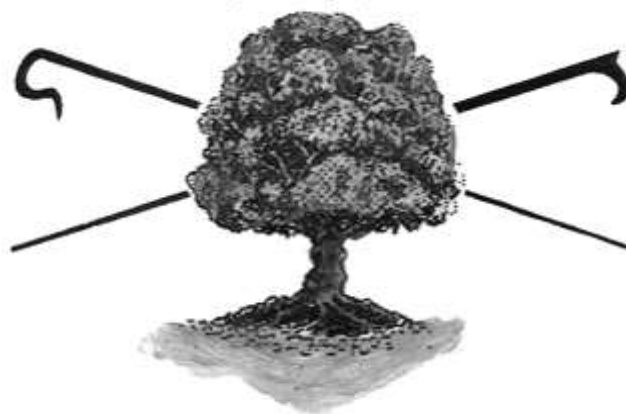
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# The Puttenham Page

by Christine Rutter

## Study Day at Puttenham

**Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> November :**  
**10.30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

*“Can you see the light?”*

*This is part of the Quiet Day series*

Grahame Senior will be visiting events from the scriptures as seen through different eyes. There will also be a Service of Light at 12.30 and the afternoon will finish with Taize worship.

A light lunch will be served in the usual way.

Please book through: [www.tringteamparish.org.uk](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk) going to the events page.

## Christmas

It seems to have come round so quickly this year!

Our **CAROL SERVICE** will take place at St.Mary's on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> December at 3.30 pm., featuring, as usual, the Ridgeway Chorale to boost our singing through the carols, the Christmas readings and, of course, the Puttenham Punch and seasonal bites. Just advance notice for your diaries,

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## Calling all gardeners in Long Marston!

**On June 28<sup>th</sup> 2026** there will be a chance to show off your garden! Whether it is large, small or has some hidden attraction then please think about sharing it with others.

The Old Church Tower Group are organising the Open Garden event which we hope will involve various groups in the village. The Old Church Tower will be overseeing the event and the WI have already agreed to supply tea and cake. Some people have already offered to open their garden and we have a promise of a plant stall raising funds for pancreatic cancer.

If you or your group would like to be involved with opening your garden, having a stall or helping in any way then please send me an email. We are beginning to plan the event so now is the time to get in touch and begin planting and planning!

Sue Foster

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# If you go down to the woods today

## A story of Longub Puttastone

by *Martin Winship*

Somehow or other, Jake found out that Rodney's birthday was fast approaching, and he put it to Thomas and Old Siegfried that they should get something "for the lad". The Gang of Four made little of birthdays as a rule, and Thomas did not even know when his was. When Old Siegfried had worked out (roughly) that *he* was about to celebrate his eightieth, he had dropped hints like breeze blocks; all to no avail. Nobody had taken a blind bit of notice and his "special occasion" passed by without a murmur. (See Village News March 2018). There was consequently a level of indifference about Rodney's up-coming event, but Jake pressed the issue. They were, he said, getting into a rut, and he opined that it was about time they did something more interesting than simply gathering in the bar of the Half Head almost every night and swilling pints of Old and Nasty.

"I like swilling pints of Old and Nasty" Old Siegfried pointed out.

"And I drink Old Nosey cider anyway" Thomas giggled.

But Jake had made his mind up, and insisted that the three of them should do something for Rodney.

"But we'd better not talk about it here" (they were, of course, in the afore-mentioned bar of the Half Head) said Jake.

"We can go to my blooming cottage" Siegfried offered. "With you two spouting hot air it might warm the place up a bit".

So they adjourned to Siegfried's cottage, to the surprise and subsequent consternation of Rupert, the landlord of the Half Head. It was almost unprecedented that Old Siegfried and his cronies were not the last customers to leave. When they went into the bijou residence, Jake was as usual astonished at the indescribable chaos and untidiness which met them.

"For crying out loud! Why don't you ever tidy up

Siggy? It must be impossible to find anything in this mess".

Siegfried shrugged. "Well, you know, you must never disturb a blooming crime scene" he pointed out.

"Crime scene? What crime scene?" asked a bewildered Jake. "Have you been burgled?"

"No, not yet. But it pays to be prepared" said Siegfried.

They settled down with bottles of Snide Rocket, and tried to think of an original present for Rodney. Jake, who had after all suggested the project, went first, proposing that they could get Rodney a book. Thomas and Siegfried both snorted derisively. Thomas pointed out that he had never seen Rodney with his nose in a book, and furthermore he had serious doubts about whether Rodney could even read.

He counter-suggested they should get him a brewing kit. It was about time, he said, that Rodney learnt how to "make his own booze". This idea also proved to be a lead balloon – brewing was a kind of work, and to Rodney that was a four-letter-word.

As frequently happened when the Gang of Four (or in this case, Three) had any kind of difference of opinion, it was Siegfried in his habitual domineering way, who had the last word. "We'll take him for blooming breakfast at Bendover Woods" he announced. "He can borrow a car and drive us up there". So that was that.

On his birthday, Rodney picked up the other three and as arranged drove them up to Bendover Woods. He had borrowed the car from a mate of his who worked for Wally's Taxis in Bling. When Rodney set off with his passengers, he switched the meter on, but this was not a popular move, and discretion out-voting avarice, he quickly switched it off again. The journey did not take long; it was no great distance.

Soon, the four of them were ensconced in the snug woodland café, tucking in to Full English breakfasts all round. There had been an awkward moment when it became obvious that when Jake, Thomas and Old Siegfried had assured Rodney that it was his treat, they evidently meant that he should be paying. Rodney quickly disillusioned them. "I've no money on me at all". The other three reluctantly dug their suddenly short arms into their surprisingly deep pockets, and managed to come up with the lucre.

They were all enjoying their breakfasts, and had just called for yet another bottle of tomato ketchup, when a cacophony of noise sprang up from outside. Such a hollering and hooting, screaming and squawking. Old Siegfried paused, a sausage impaled on his fork half way up to his gaping mouth. "What the blooming heck is going on out there"? he wondered.

"It's Go Squirrel I think" said Jake.

"Go Squirrel"? Siegfried enquired. "What the blooming heck is that when it's at home"



"It's like a sort of assault course, but up in the trees. You know, rope bridges, swings, nets and zip-wires. Supposed to be great fun" Jake explained.

"Fun"? Siegfried repeated, his voice high with disbelief. "You wouldn't catch me pretending to be a blooming squirrel. Half-baked idea".

Rodney frowned, and a cunning look appeared on his face. "Alice was talking about someone she knew who had done it. She seemed to think he was very brave. Really singing his praises".

Siegfried scratched his bristly chin. "Did she? Well, I suppose there'd be no harm in having a go – if someone else pays"! (Rodney treated them all; he "found" a wad of tightly rolled tenners in an inside pocket).

It proved to be much worse than Siegfried had imagined. They had to wear special harnesses, and having climbed a ladder to the first platform built round an exceedingly tall fir tree, clip themselves on, and set off across a flimsy and very mobile rope bridge. It might have given Indiana Jones pause for thought. Worse followed. One by one, they grasped a hanging rope and swung across a clearing, to be caught like a fly in a spider's web, in a large net suspended between the trees. And so it went on. The other three seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the experience. Thomas had developed high-spirited hiccups at the start, and they had continued unabated and with increasing volume ever since. When the four of them found themselves looking down the length of an enormous zip-wire, which disappeared away into the trees, Rodney went first, followed by Jake, and then Thomas. Siegfried could hear Thomas's hiccups slowly fading in the distance. He eyed the wire without enthusiasm. Then, making his mind up, he descended the escape ladder, having decided that he had definitely had enough, and would wait for the others by

the car. And blow what blooming Alice thought.

He knew, or imagined he knew, where the car park was, and set off confidently. The going was more challenging than he had expected, with much rampant undergrowth beneath the trees. Brambles and fallen branches caught and snatched at his feet and legs, and it was dim and gloomy too; not much daylight penetrated to the floor of the forest. He frequently stumbled, and once fell, flat on his face, and had a good deal of trouble finding his hat which blended in so well with the thick growth covering the ground. He struggled on, becoming hot and bothered, and grumbling to himself in a low, growling sort of way, with many "bloomings" thrown in. An hour and a half later, he was still trying to find the car, having been spotted occasionally, unknown to him, by other woodland visitors.

## FROM THE BLING BUGLE NEWSPAPER

### "British Bigfoot?"

*Anyone familiar with the acres of Bendover Woods will be amazed to learn of the rumours of a large, ape-like creature supposedly seen by several eye-witnesses. Descriptions of the mystery animal vary, but it is generally said to be roughly man-sized, very shaggy in appearance, and shambling and blundering in its movements amongst the trees. Some witnesses told your reporter that the creature also made strange, unearthly noises, "like a bear in pain", and it has been claimed that it occasionally cried out in an almost human voice. The Woodland Authority advise against approaching the creature, and ask for further sightings to be reported.*



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

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Christine Rutter 07514 548289

#### All Saints Long Marston

Rev'd Jane Banister 01442 822170

Churchwarden Judith Weatherall

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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

### TRP Council Contacts

#### Your Parish Councillors are:

#### Chairman Nigel Fox

TRPCCouncillor@gmail.com

#### Vivian Wood

email: RPCCouncillor2@gmail.com

#### Richard Foster (Vice-Chairman)

TRPCCouncillor3@gmail.com

#### Gill MacDonald (Long Marston)

TRPCCouncillor4@gmail.com

#### Maria Adams

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### Vacancies 3

#### Clerk to the Parish Council

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email: clerk@tringrural-pc.co.uk

### Villages Warden

Colin Reedman 01442 822031

email: TRPCWarden@gmail.com

Where no personal telephone number is shown use the clerk's number: 07516344248

## REPAIR CAFE

### **Bigsy the bear steals the limelight** *by Chris Owen*

September's Repair Café was a relatively quiet event but there was a star of the show and that was Bigsy, a teddy bear owned and lovingly cared for by Ash, a resident of Wilstone. Ash describes Bigsy's rather touching life story from his origins in Japan to his current home in Wilstone.

'Bigsy, a bear of stout character and originally a resident of Tokyo, has seen more service than most family retainers. Forty-two years ago, before I had even made my debut in the world, he was pressed into duty as a model for nappy-changing practice. In the ensuing years of my childhood he was loved with such enthusiasm that his once-proud fur has vanished, and his innards now consist chiefly of old tights.

For three decades he lived in a sort of dignified semi-retirement, lodged on a shelf, swaddled in a babygrow, a measure which, while hardly entirely dignified for Bigsy, was deemed essential to prevent bits of him falling out. Then along came Phoebe, aged fifteen months, who took one look at him and declared him fit for active service once more. Her curiosity about his many holes has been boundless, and Bigsy began to look like a hopeless case.

Enter the Repair Café, Bigsy's spiritual equivalent of Harley Street. In he went, and out he came with a facelift that smoothed over the worst ravages of time. He is still slightly lopsided, three decades of being stuffed with tights will do that to a chap, but fresh fur is on the way, and full restoration is now firmly in sight.

In short, the old boy is rallying splendidly.'

The Repair Café is normally open between 10.30am and 1pm in the Village Hall on the first Saturday in the month. The next one is on Saturday 1 November. Please come along and get your broken toys or toasters mended or your torn item of clothing repaired. And while you're waiting have a cup of tea or coffee and a tasty cookie.





## WI Report Yes we do cake!

By Susan Hughes

Picture by Sue Foster

At this month's meeting we were delighted to invite a local, young female entrepreneur to demonstrate the art of cake decorating.

Le Cordon Bleu trained chef, Alice Louisa from Wingrave, arrived armed with freshly made cup cakes, butter cream and fondant icing in a rainbow of colours.

She deftly demonstrated the art of icing – making it look all too easy – nevertheless a beautiful array of cup cakes were created by the WI women present. Oh, and they tasted good too!

This was a lovely, gentle evening on a dark October night, helping us ease into the winter season and it was an absolute pleasure to support a young woman and her thriving local business.

Check out her website; [bakedbyalicelouisa.co.uk](http://bakedbyalicelouisa.co.uk)

Note; The Long Marston and Puttenham Women's Institute meet every second Tuesday of the month at Victory Hall, Long Marston at 7.30pm. New members welcome.



**Delicious cakes from Alice Louisa from Wingrave**

## The wild robot comes to Wilstone

by Peter Walker

In October, Wilstone Village Hall hosted a showing of the children's film, *The Wild Robot*, a film which has won many international awards. At one point it was the no 1 most watched movie in the world, and went on to earn multiple Golden Globe nominations and Academy Award nominations.



**Author Peter Brown and Ben Moorhouse at Wilstone Village Hall**

The audience of children and parents were treated to a talk about the film from the author of the book which was the basis of the film, Peter Brown, who flew in from the US especially for a tour of schools and halls to promote his book.

The event was hosted by Ben Moorhouse, best known as owner of Our Bookshop in Tring and promoter of many book launches and guest interviews, as well as the instigator of the Tring Festival.

