

# Westcott Village Magazine

April 2025



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Cover photo - Full moon over Westcott Heath

Westcott has a population of over 2,000 and this is the only magazine written specifically for the Westcott area by the people of Westcott. It is hand delivered, free of charge, to every household and further copies are available at the church, local shops, pub and doctor's surgery.



If you have any articles, photos, letters, etc that you think we may like to feature in the next issue, please email the Editor on:

**[editor@westcottmag.com](mailto:editor@westcottmag.com)**

But please note, publication will always be subject to space and at the discretion of the Editor.

Copy deadline for

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**8th April 2025**

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## FROM THE EDITOR



I hope you've all managed to enjoy some of the sun we've been having as I write this, it may have disappeared again by the time you read it, of course!

Easter falls on 20th April this year, which is pretty late, so hopefully the weather will also be good for the long weekend and you will all be able to get out in our beautiful countryside.

QRMW have their Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday 13th, please register

beforehand (see p32 for details) to ensure there are enough prizes to go round!

The Village Hall Committee are looking for new trustees, see page 29 for all the details if you think you might be interested. Their annual meeting is on 30th, and all are invited to attend and observe.

Happy Easter, and don't eat all your chocolate before Easter Monday!

**Cath**  
**[editor@westcottmag.com](mailto:editor@westcottmag.com)**

### Dance 2B Fit

Brighten your week and join us at our Exercise for Health class where you will be warmly welcomed. We dance, gently, to favourite tunes, toning and

stretching our upper bodies, knees, hips and brains!

We puff a lot! Laugh a lot! And generally feel better for spending an hour in each others' company.



Please come and try a taster class with us at Westcott Village Hall on Tuesday mornings 10.30 to 11.30 a.m.

To find out more contact Diane 07799580906

# ...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



## EASTER IS DECISIVE

'Christmas is important, but Easter is decisive.'

These seasonal words were apparently spoken during the 2002/3 Premier League season by then Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, as his club were chasing the title. His words were prescient as Arsenal would go on to lose the season to Manchester United (which tells you just how long ago this took place). His words also speak of what I believe to be a deeper truth. If you had to name our main cultural festival in the UK then you would probably say Christmas – family, turkey, presents, sprouts, etc. Easter, for many families, offers the chance to indulge in some oval shaped chocolate goodies, but beyond that, for many, it is just another weekend.



But for most Christians throughout history Easter is the singularly most decisive moment in our understanding of the world. Yes, Christmas is important. It is the moment Christians pause to remember the outrageous claim that the creator of matter, and antimatter, and space, and time, and DNA, and me, and you, choose to step into the world and become one of us homo sapiens. He became Emmanuel – which means 'God with us.' Christmas is important.

“FOR MOST CHRISTIANS  
THROUGHOUT  
HISTORY EASTER IS THE  
SINGULARLY MOST  
DECISIVE MOMENT IN  
OUR UNDERSTANDING

It is Easter however which changes everything. The moment when this 'God with us' named Jesus moved beyond what could have been some divine factfinding fieldtrip, and died. Now, I know everyone dies. But he died horribly. Tragically

so do many others around the world today. But he, or so we Christians claim, died for us. Well, so do others to protect their friends, or nations, or beliefs. But he died in my place and that wasn't the end of the story. It is on Easter morning I remember that this 'God with us' rose from the grave. It is on Easter morning that I remember that somehow death and evil, my failings and mistakes, have somehow lost their grip on me. It is Easter that is decisive. It is at Easter that hope wins.

## ...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

---

Now, I may be deluded. However, as my eternal hope as well as how I live my life in ways which try to run against my more selfish inclinations both hang on the plausibility of this claim, I have dug into this claim of Jesus' resurrection with every ounce of my limited intellect and I have found it to be outrageous, plausible and compelling. Enough so for it to be the event in human history which I am willing to gamble everything else on. I believe Easter happened.

So I have hope even in my deepest despair. So the world has hope even in it's darkest moments. For 2000 years Christians have declared this hope amidst famines, wars, oppressive tyrants, pandemics, changing times and cultures, and the rise and fall of nations. So on April 20th I am going to church carrying all my doubts, fears, and uncertainties to declare that 'Christ is risen!' Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are very warmly invited to come along and join me.

Every Blessing, Tim





## APRIL SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY



**8.30am** Book of Common Prayer Communion, A warm welcome in our beautiful, traditional service.

**10.15am** Friendly, relaxed service, using Common Worship and a range of music styles. This service is also livestreamed on Zoom.



**For 10:15am Zoom service connection**, please scan this QR code, or visit the Online Services page of [thechurchinwestcott.org.uk](http://thechurchinwestcott.org.uk) and follow the link.

*The church is open every day, 9am-4pm for private prayer & reflection*

DATE	THEME	8:30AM	10:15AM
6th April	Lent 6	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
13th April	Lent 7	Book of Common Prayer Communion	20-20-20 with Breakfast
20th April	Easter Sunday	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
28th April	APCM	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion



### MARKING LIFE EVENTS

All who live in Westcott or have a connection here are very welcome to have christenings, funerals, weddings in Holy Trinity. Contact [vicar@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk](mailto:vicar@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk) for more information.

## MIDWEEK PRAYER & WORSHIP

Wednesdays

10am

Communion at St John's

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All are welcome

## Easter at Holy Trinity

### Palm Sunday - 13th April

8.30am - Book of Common Prayer Communion

10.15am - Palm Sunday Morning Worship with Breakfast

### Maundy Thursday - 17th April

7.30pm - Bring and Share Meal with Communion

### Good Friday - 18th April

9am - Morning Prayer at the Cross

7.30pm - Reflections at the Cross

### Easter Sunday - 20th April

8.30am - Book of Common Prayer Easter Communion

10.15am - All-Age Communion Service

Followed by an Egg Hunt!



# THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

---

The Church in Westcott is part of the Westcott Good Neighbour Scheme and we are always here for a chat, prayer, pastoral need.

**Debt advice:** Paul Stacey (paulstacey88@gmail.com)

**Holy Trinity Pastoral Assistants:** Mark Shakespeare (01306 888010), Ali Mabley (alimabley.htw@gmail.com)

For help, or more information, please contact  
Tim Armstrong, Vicar: vicar@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk  
or visit thechurchinwestcott.org.uk



## Floodlighting

If you'd like to sponsor the church  
floodlighting for April  
or any other month,  
please contact Sarah Massey at  
admin@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk.  
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# SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

What another inspirational spring term we have had. Thank you for all your support in joining us for our Inspire Sessions, for the many volunteers that have helped out with Lego Clubs, sports tournaments, Forest School, reading and trips. We can only continue to offer such a rich curriculum with the help of our volunteers, so let us know if you would like to join the team.

Our SIAMS Inspection went really well, and once again, we would like to thank you for your feedback and support throughout the process. The report will be shared with us in the next few weeks. Thank you also for your parent questionnaire feedback. So many positive comments and also some good next steps.

We had some exciting trips, following on from some great explorations with the Choir to our local Care Home, Year 3 to Butser Farm and enjoying Feet Training, our Year 5 and 6 hockey team to the Dorking Schools tournament, where they represented us with pride, and a Horsham Museum Victorian workshop in Year 1 and 2, not to mention our Safer Internet Day and Mental Health Week.

Butterflies had a great 'Wow day' dressed up as Victorian school children. We enjoyed a Victorian school workshop from Horsham museum where we found out just how different schools were in Victorian times



where boys and girls would enter the building through different entrances and spend the morning learning the 'Three R's' (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) with very strict teachers! In the afternoons girls were taught sewing, childcare and how to keep house while boys learnt woodwork, metal work and gardening. Luckily for Butterflies everyone passed the clean hand check and the cane was not needed very often!



Hedgehogs had a fantastic trip to Ancient Buster Farm where we got to step back in time. First, we got to experience what it was like to have a fire in a Stone Age house. We then went on to make our own bronze rings, spin our owl wool bookmarks, wattle our





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# SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS SCHOOL (cont.)

own fence and even complete an archaeological dig to find real artefacts! Hedge hogs were amazing and impressed everyone with their extensive history knowledge and excellent behaviour all day. We even got a delicious hot chocolate as a treat to help warm us up!



children in those times and why figures such as Lord Shaftesbury have helped to shape their lives now. It has been a fascinating journey and I encourage asking your child about their favourite discovery!

Well done to the Surrey Hills Hockey Team who played at the Hockey tournament at St Johns C of E Primary School.



Surrey Hills also participated in the RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch. We camouflaged ourselves outside and tried to see how many different types of birds we could spot around our school grounds. We were surprised with just how many birds we saw!



This half term Rabbits have stepped back in time and explored what life

was like for Victorian children. We have been comparing schooling, work and home life to today. Did you know children worked from as young as 5 years old! The children have also discovered the challenges faced by



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## Dorking Local History Group

The DLHG continues its popular programme of both live and Zoom talks on a fascinating range of topics. These are free to members, but non-members are welcome. Upcoming dates include:

**George Abbot: the Archbishop of Canterbury from Surrey: “Guildford’s most famous person in our nation’s history”:** author Mary Alexander’s live talk concentrates on Abbot’s life in Guildford and what he did for the town. Monday 7th April at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.

**The Development of Surrey’s Railways:** Zoom talk by industrial historian Richard Marks takes us back to the Victorian age and forward into the 20th century. Tuesday 15th April, 7.30pm, <https://www.meet-up.com/Surrey-History-Meetup/>.

For further details of talks and other activities – or to join DLHG – go to <https://dlhg.org.uk>



## Tuesday 8th April 10.30am

### Saint George in England: a visual legacy

Saint George, patron saint of England is, as you may well know, not English at all yet his image abounds all over the country. Lecturer Dr Alison Berker tells how his cult came to appear in England and how his image as a valiant knight slaying a mighty dragon was promulgated throughout the realm and over the centuries.



The lecture will be held at 10.30 in Martineau Hall, Dorking Halls. Coffee is available from 9:30am. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £7.50 but contact Linda Packham on 07960 995707 (email - [ljpackman@gmail.com](mailto:ljpackman@gmail.com)) to book. For more information and details of the forthcoming programme, visit [www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk)

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## Swallows

One Swallow might not make a summer, but a first sighting of one is a sure sign that warmer weather is on its way. Up until the 18th century, before the mysteries of migration were able to be investigated, it was a common belief that Swallows and Swifts hibernated through the winter in the mud at the bottom of lakes and streams.

With the help of society's technological advances and bird ringing, we can now confirm that these high-fliers overwinter in South Africa, often migrating distances up to 6,000 miles. In April you'll likely get your first sighting of these

avian athletes as they catch insects on the wing. During April and May they'll begin gathering mud and straw to construct their cup-shaped nests.

See more on our activities and photos or if you're interested in joining

Facebook: RSPB Dorking and District

Instagram: @rsbp\_dorking

Website: <https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/>

**Jonathan Groves**

Swallows: courtesy RSPB images



## Westcott Gardeners Club - February Race Night

We had a lot of fun and great food on an unusual social night of horse racing board-game style. The club were happy to donate £50 to the Westcott Village Hall for the Rebuilding Fund.

**Jo Smewing**



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*The Westcott Village Fair*

2015-2025

# WEST *fest*

10<sup>TH</sup> Birthday Party

SUNDAY

22<sup>nd</sup> TWENTY TWENTY FIVE  
JUNE

Cradhurst 11.30-4.00 AM PM  
Recreation Ground

CARNIVAL DRUMS ★ BUNGEE TRAMPOLINES ★ LIVE MUSIC  
★ FUN RUN ★ DOG AGILITY ★ FOOD & DRINK ★ MAYPOLE  
FUN DOG SHOW ★ CREAM TEAS ★ SCARECROWS ★  
★ ARTISAN STALLS ★ POETRY ★ CANDY FLOSS ★  
ROCK CHOIR ★ SILENT AUCTION ★ RACES ★  
JAZZ ★ FREE GAMES ★ COCONUT SHY ★ SOFT PLAY

to 10 years!

Cheers to 10 years!

Cheers to 10 years!

Cheers to 10 years!

Cheers to 10 years!



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## WESTCOTT BABY MEALS



## April Update

Late in February the Westcott Baby Meals team supported a family while mum recovered from a serious operation. Thanks to all the cooks for creating an array of family favourites for the young family to enjoy.

## Can we help you?

As I write this we're not aware of any more babies in "the pipeline" but surely there are some on their way in the village?! We're always really pleased to help out so please get in touch!

If you live in Westcott and you're expecting or have recently had a baby and would like help with (free!) meals for the family for a couple of weeks, or if you need meals during a challenging time, please contact:

Anna: 07710 425487 [annakemkers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:annakemkers@hotmail.co.uk)

**SUNDAY 22 JUNE**  
2015-2025

**WEST** *fest*  
10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party

**5KM / 2.5KM**

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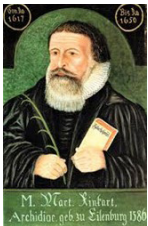
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# WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP

## A Hymn of Thanks



The German hymn *Nun danket alle Gott* (Now Thank we all our God) is loved by people all over the world. The words have been translated into many languages, and a number of composers have used the tune in their own works, among them J.S.Bach (5 works), F. Mendelssohn, J. Brahms, M. Reger and others, right up to modern times. Both words and tune were written by Martin Rinckart, a Lutheran pastor at the church of St Nikolai in Eilenburg, Saxony, the town where I was born and the church where my father was the organist as a young man.



Martin Rinckart lived from 1586-1649, a time when the Thirty Years' War raged through Europe, Protestants against Catholics, causing famine and pestilence

and leaving countries devastated and the population decimated. The armies advanced and retreated time and time again, demanding food and money for their soldiers, leaving the people impoverished and starving.

In 1639, the Protestant Swedish army advancing through Saxony came

to Eilenburg and demanded food and a large amount of money. The people had nothing more to give and although they were also Protestants, the Swedish general threatened to burn the town down if the required sum was not paid. The townsfolk were desperate. Pastor Martin Rinckart pleaded with the leadership, but in vain. So he called the parishioners to a special church service to pray for deliverance. Two Swedish officers attended the service and were moved by the plight of the people. They reported to their superiors that they believed the inhabitants had nothing more to give and the army moved on. Eilenburg was saved from destruction. A service of thanksgiving was held and they sang the hymn *Nun danket alle Gott* which their pastor had written for them some years previously, around 1630.

Years later a local artist painted the scene of the special



prayer service using people of the town as models, showing the Swedish officers listening to the service and Martin Rinckart praying from the chancel. The painting hung in the assembly hall of the local high school but was taken down during the communist rule in East Germany.

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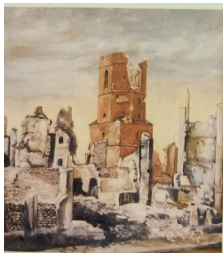
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Luckily it was not destroyed, the caretaker hid it in the loft, and it has pride of place again in the same spot at my old school, which is now called Martin-Rinckart-Gymnasium.

Unfortunately, Eilenburg was not as lucky during World War II. At the end of April 1945, a few days before the end of the war, the American Army had reached the outskirts of the town. Everybody knew that the war was lost but the fanatical German commandant refused to hand over the town. The elders of the town council begged him to surrender, but he threatened to execute them for defeatism, and the ultimatum expired. I was 9 years old at the time. We sought shelter in the cellar of our house, the Kantorhaus, next to the vicarage and opposite the church of St Marien, the oldest church in Eilenburg, built on the Castle Hill overlooking the town.



The artillery fire continued for 2 days and nights. When the firing stopped, we saw below us the town in flames, an inferno.

90% of the town centre was destroyed. St Nikolai, Martin Rinckart's church, lay in ruins, and many lives were lost. It was the last German town to be destroyed, 80 years ago, on 22nd April 1945.

Our church of St Marien and the Kantorhouse had survived, it was a miracle. They were of course badly damaged: one pillar inside the church had collapsed taking part of the vaulted roof with it, and all the windows were broken. A rocket grenade went through the wall in my parents' bedroom and out through the window opposite without exploding, leaving just big holes. My father discovered an unexploded shell in his beloved church organ, and with my eldest brother he removed it carefully and carried it gently down from the organ loft, through the rubble in the church nave to a newly dug grave in the churchyard where it was later defused.

Hard years followed with the Soviet occupation after the division of post-war Germany, but Eilenburg and St Nikolai have been rebuilt and St Marien renovated, and Martin Rinckart's hymn lives on. It has accompanied me through my life, at my Christening, Confirmation, Wedding and other important occasions. For me it is both a hymn of thanks and a happy reminder of my home town in Germany.



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## A Public Call for New Trustees for Westcott Village Hall Trust CIO

In accordance with Westcott Village Hall Trust CIO and the CIO Administration Rules (dated April 24th 2024), Rule 2, which sets out the appointment of new CIO Trustees, the current trustees are required to refresh the existing group of trustees. Accordingly, each year, we invite applications by inhabitants of Westcott and the surrounding area who are willing to put themselves forward, or, who are nominated by other residents with their consent.

There are currently 7 trustees all of whom are remaining as trustees. They consist of Helen Everett, Deborah Lewis, James Broderick, Andy Gray, Andy Taylor, Tony Winch and Sally Hewetson. We are permitted up to 12 trustees to serve at any one time. A trustee can serve for three years up to a maximum term of 9 continuous years.

Please refer to the CIO's website [www.westcottvillagehall.com](http://www.westcottvillagehall.com) and the Charity Commissions Web site <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5098773/governance> for further information on this specific charity. The Charity Commissions general website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do> is useful for broader information on the role of a trustee in the UK.

Anyone interested in becoming a trustee please apply by submitting an email to [info@westcottvillagehall.com](mailto:info@westcottvillagehall.com) or a letter addressed to Westcott Village Hall, Institute Road, Westcott RH4 3NP. Please set out the reasons why you wish to be appointed giving details of the skills and experience that you will bring to the Trust. All applications will be considered by the trustees and a meeting with applicants may be requested. The trustees will decide before the end of April on any appointment.



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## **Notice of a Meeting of the Trustees of Westcott Village Hall Trust CIO at the Westcott Village Hall on Wednesday, April 30th 2025 at 7pm**

Westcott Village Hall Trust CIO is governed by its trustees. With limited exceptions (and reflecting how modern charities are generally run) only the trustees are entitled to attend and vote at meetings. However, in the interest of transparency and good governance, the trustees have adopted a policy to declare their quarterly meeting to be held in April each year as an 'open meeting' which residents may attend as observers.

This year, the trustees' April meeting will be held in Westcott Village Hall at 7pm on Wednesday, 30th April 2025 and all residents of Westcott and the neighbourhood are warmly invited to attend as observers.

The business of the meeting will include:

- (i) a review of the CIO's report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are currently in the course of preparation;
- (ii) the appointment (or, if eligible, re-appointment) of trustees;
- (iii) an update on the planning application for the proposed new houses on the site of The Hut and the new village hall on the current site of WVH;
- (vi) such matters concerning the operations of the CIO as may arise and be appropriate for discussion in an open forum.

**Sally Hewetson**  
**Chairperson**  
**Westcott Village Hall Trust CIO**



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March arrived and although milder than the February temperatures it was a wet start. I was also busy in my workshop during the early part of February making new bird boxes which are now in place and I am thrilled to see the birds have been extremely interested in them. I have placed the new boxes on the trees surrounding the Visitors Centre so that visitors can sit on the veranda and watch the birds making their nests and feeding their chicks.

Our resident pheasants are still coming to be fed as soon as I arrive in the morning but I know that when the females are sitting on eggs we won't see them for some time until they come with their youngsters.



The trees are all showing signs of bursting into life as are the many ferns around the woodland. Such a joyful time of the year.

We are now fast approaching our ever popular Easter Egg Hunt and

family fun day. I am still working on the actual Easter Egg Hunt for the children, every year I try to give them different things to search for and collect to get their Easter goody bags. It's all good fun and we also have egg and spoon races and various games, plus a lucky dip for the children. The Easter Egg stall will have a variety of eggs for sale all at prices cheaper than in the shops. The sweet stall is a delight for the children and adults all put together by my sister and her daughter and the Easter Raffle has some excellent Easter related prizes. We also have the BBQ on the go and hot and cold drinks.

So do come along and join us on Sunday 13th April at 12.30. Please make sure you contact [Debbiehornblow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Debbiehornblow@yahoo.co.uk) to register the children for the Easter Egg Hunt to ensure we have sufficient goody bags to give the children on completion of the hunt.

As we move into Spring and Summer we do hope that you will visit us, bring a picnic and enjoy the flora and fauna and tranquillity of our beautiful woodland.

I look forward to seeing you.

**Paul Cooling, Chairman**  
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Seville Marmalade category and the Under 14's Mixed Fruit category at the Kingfisher Farm Shop Competition. Thank you for making it happen Henny! And parents, we hope you enjoyed your award winning produce cooked outside no less!



Growing season is upon us and with this in mind we took the opportunity (any excuse!) to get our hands dirty. Filling buckets with sumptuous compost we then popped a few holes in the bottom carefully using our tools, before popping in some potatoes. And to continue the fun at home we each took with us a magic bean to nurture until they are ready to be given a permanent place home in our lovely veggie patch.



It has been glorious to see the sun shining once more – for a whole week what a treat! It means we have been able to

spend even more time in our garden creating a la carte menus in the mud kitchen and building terribly tall wobbly towers from our wooden blocks! But most of all we just love the freedom to run around and about as fast as we can!

The seaside came to the Evelyn Hall and the tuff tray was transformed into a beachside wonder. There were all kinds of sea creatures emerging from the depths of the sand and shells of all sizes and textures for us to explore. Of course we needed to get wet being at the coast so we set up an experiment to see which natural materials floated and which ones sank. There were lots of surprises!

Now If you are very clever have a go at deciphering the song we have been learning in French... altogether now...  
*Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds. Genoux et pieds. Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds. Genoux et pieds. J'ai deux yeux, deux oreilles, Une bouche et un nez. Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds.*

We are really pleased to announce that our after school club will be extended to 5pm Monday to Thursday from the Summer Term. If you have a child looking to start nursery please don't hesitate to get in touch. Please call 07842 978823 or email [abingercommonnursery@gmail.com](mailto:abingercommonnursery@gmail.com) We can't wait to show you around!

**Kate Fairbrass**



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	Fresh Bread & Cakes	Fresh Bread & Cakes	Sourdough & Sausage Rolls	Fresh Bread & Cakes	Fresh Bread & Cakes
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## Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan – Westcott Village Forum

The second meeting of the Westcott Village Forum (WVF) was held at Holy Trinity on 27th February. The Forum is made up of volunteers from the village who will drive the update and review of the existing Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan gives our community the opportunity to create a shared vision for Westcott and set out a positive plan for development in the next 10 years. The Forum is supported by three working groups; Planning Policy (led by Ian Dunsford), Data Collection & Analysis (led by Chris Smewing) and Communications (led by Jo Astor) with Kevin Foo as Programme Lead. So far over 130 people from all areas of the village have volunteered to be part of the Forum, this also includes some of the businesses, groups and clubs in the village. Nearly 40 people attended the meeting.

The Forum is currently in 'start-up mode' pending official sign off by MVDC to the draft Forum Constitution and the Boundary, which is the geographical area that will be covered by the updated Plan. Copies of the presentation material from the meeting and all the documentation, including the draft Forum Constitution and a copy of the current WNDP can be found on the dedicated Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan

pages of the Westcott Village website at <https://westcottvillage.com/westcott-neighbourhood-development-plan/>

When the current Neighbourhood Development Plan was put together it was greatly informed by a survey delivered to every household in the village with an amazing 85% response rate. This exercise will be repeated this time around and the Forum meeting also agreed that a professional Housing Needs Survey would be commissioned to inform the number and type of homes that are needed in the village in the development plan period. Timings for all this activity are currently being developed.

The target is to have a revised and updated Neighbourhood Plan ready to be put to a public referendum vote in the village by May 2026, to coincide with the Polling Stations being open for local elections to the new Unitary Authority for Surrey, so voting can take place at the same time. At least 50% of those voting for the Neighbourhood Plan need to vote in favour for it to be formally adopted. It's never too late to get involved in this important work, so if you think you would like to join the Westcott Village Forum please get in touch by sending an email to [contact@westcottvillage.com](mailto:contact@westcottvillage.com)

**Kevin Foo, Chris Smewing, Ian Dunsford, James Leaver, Jo Astor, Paul Goddard, Nick Lund**



# Westcott Village Hall

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The current village hall is likely to be redeveloped within the next 1-2 years, replacing it with a modern, flexible, sustainable community facility. We will give our users at least 6 months' notice of the anticipated closure date so that everyone will have enough time to secure a replacement venue during the building period.

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[www.westcottvillagehall.com](http://www.westcottvillagehall.com)

**Roads and Pavements** The WVA has been campaigning on highways-related issues and we are very pleased to see a number of improvements including:

1) *Hedge clearing* by Surrey County Council (SCC) along the A25 to the east and west of the village has helped stop overgrown trees and bushes from encroaching onto the pavement.

2) *Reclaiming the pavements* - the significant build-up of soil, weeds, branches and leaves is currently being cleared from the pavements stretching from Balchins Lane towards Milton Court Lane.

This is improving the usable width of the pavement and we would like to thank Hazel Watson for adding this work to SCC's 'Spring Clean' programme. Work is scheduled to be completed by the end of April. The large volume of debris that had collected on the pavement on the north side of the A25 opposite the Village Hall has also been cleared by MVDC.

3) *Replacement fencing* - SCC recently commissioned a replacement fence near School Lane after the old one became unsafe. The raised section of pavement from School Lane to Corner Cottage now provides a safer



walking route along the busy A25.

Dialogue continues between the WVA, MVDC and SCC on a variety of subjects connected to road usage and a meeting took place at Pippbrook last month including improving road safety outside the school, how to potentially tackle the frequent traffic queues heading into Dorking and addressing the very poor condition of the pedestrian/cycle path between Westcott and Dorking. It is pleasing to note some positive progress taking place.

## New Surrey On Demand Bus Service



There is a new on demand bus service in Surrey. The service uses accessible electric minibuses and adult fares for journeys under five miles are only £2 (£1 if you're aged 20 and under). You simply register, pre-book your journey, stating which bus stop you want to be picked up from and dropped off at and the software groups requests together to create journeys within 10 minutes of your preferred pick-up time. For more information see <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/buses-and-other-transport/community-transport/surrey-connect#how> Do give it a try, if it is well used it more likely to thrive and survive.

**WVA Committee**  
**contact@westcottvillage.com**

# Westcott Open Gardens



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5th at 7.30, Brockham Choral Society at St Martin's church, £10

11th & 12th at 7.30, Leith Hill Music Festival at Dorking Halls, £20-25, 01306 881717

April begins with a guitar recital, the final concert in the Dorking Concertgoers season. Local musician Fiona Harrison, who has already played several times for the Concertgoers, will play a varied programme, with music ranging from Scarlatti to contemporary Japanese, with a good selection of pieces by Spanish composers.

Brockham Choral Society will sing Haydn's great oratorio *The Creation*. The choir, conducted by Cole Bendall will be joined by vocal soloists and accompanied by the British Sinfonietta.

The Leith Hill Music Festival holds its two days of competitions and concerts in April. This will be the first festival under the direction of the exciting new festival conductor Neil Ferris. People are invited to attend the morning competitions when the choirs perform separately and compete for a range of trophies. In the evening concerts the choirs join together – Friday's concert features lively jazz-infused music by Will Todd, including his large-scale piece *Passion Music*, while Elgar's masterpiece *The dream of Gerontius* is on the programme for Saturday.

The Dorking Halls is showing Puccini's final opera *Turandot* in two screenings - live and encore - from the Royal Opera House. This tale of love for an icy princess includes the famous aria *Nessun Dorma*.

**Ian Codd**





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## DORKING MUSEUM

**Family Activities at Dorking Library:** In conjunction with Dorking Library, on Saturday 12th April, 10am to noon, we will be celebrating Easter. Children can use craft materials to make an Easter card. Aimed at 4–11 year olds, materials are provided free and children must be accompanied.

**Walking in Dorking:** As the weather improves, what better way to make the most of the attractions this area has to offer



than with the Museum's popular programme of guided walks which starts a new season this month. On the edge of town, a Betchworth Castle tour includes exclusive access to the Castle enclosure. This 'castle' is the romantic ruin of the only remaining fortified medieval manor house in Surrey. A 360-acre deer park surrounded the house, and you can still see sweet chestnut trees dating back nearly 600 years, the site of the lime avenue and a watermill and fountain. Sunday 6th April, 2pm, from the entrance to Betchworth Park Golf Club. Walks on The Deepdene Trail start in May.

In the town centre, the Blue Plaques and Statues walk tells of some of the famous people who lived or were active in Dorking, revealing a diverse

range of interests and activities: Sunday 6th April, 2pm, from the Cubitt statue opposite Dorking Halls. See Dorking as you have never seen it before on the guided walk of Hidden Historic Dorking, where some features will be hidden round corners or above you, others will be hidden 'in plain sight': Sunday 13th April, 11am. Our ever-popular Dorking Historic Pub Walk reveals stories of hostelries, pubs and inns both past and present: Saturday 26th April, 6pm.



All walks last around an hour and a half and should be booked in advance: details and booking at [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/guided-walks-around-dorking/](http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/guided-walks-around-dorking/). Walks may also be arranged for private groups on these or other itineraries: see website for details, enquiries and group booking.

**South Street Caves tours:** One of Dorking's most popular attractions, the 17th century South Street Caves lie beneath Dorking's busy streets, complete with graffiti carved into the walls, the oldest dating back to 1666. A series of staircases, galleries, wine vaults and chambers lead down to the 'Mystery Chamber', 50 feet below street level. Guided tours take place on the last Saturday of each month

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## DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)



of the season. Open Day on 26th April. Tours at 10am, 11am, 1pm and 2pm, each lasting about 45 minutes and led by a trained guide. For details and open day bookings (which sell out fast!) see [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/south-street-caves/](http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/south-street-caves/). Private group bookings may also be made, e-mail [caves@dorkingmuseum.org.uk](mailto:caves@dorkingmuseum.org.uk) to arrange a date.

### **Building between the vines – the story of the Denbies LEGO house:**



The Museum's current exhibition has been particularly popular with visitors. It continues through April but will close in May. It tells the story of how and why a full-size house was built of LEGO on the Denbies Wine Estate in 2009. It was the subject of one programme of a BBC television series, James May Toy Stories. 2009 marked the 60th anniversary of the first LEGO bricks being produced!

The two-storey house took almost 2,000 volunteers to build over a five-week period, using over 3.3 million bricks and included furniture, furnishings, kitchen appliances, and even a shower, sink and flushing loo on the top floor – and a LEGO cat!

Specially designed Lego models of buildings and objects with a Dorking connection are on display, and a LEGO Dorking Cockerel trail around the Museum, with prizes, continues for the duration of the exhibition. At a special family activity in late February, 'Dorking in LEGO', families were invited to create LEGO models of Dorking features and buildings. The children's models have been added to the display in the Museum's front window for all visitors and passers-by to see until the exhibition ends.

**Get involved:** The Museum is looking for new volunteers who can spare a few hours a month at the front desk or in a range of other roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. See [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities](http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities) for further details.

Dorking Museum, 62 West Street, Dorking RH4 1BS. Open Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm, free entry. [www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk](http://www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk). 01306 876591.

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Dorking Group of Artists' Spring Exhibition  
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Alan Brown

Open to the public:  
Friday May 2nd – Sunday May 4th  
10:00 – 17:00,  
Monday May 5th 10:00 – 16:00

The Dorking Group of Artists, probably the largest art group in Surrey, are delighted to be returning to Betchworth Village Hall for their popular Spring exhibition. Many of our members are professional artists, and our exhibitions have a strong reputation for artistic merit and quality of presentation. The original art in our exhibition is all for sale at affordable prices. The paintings demonstrate a wide range of different subjects, styles and media. Original art makes a unique and thoughtful gift.

Entrance to the exhibition is free and Betchworth Village Hall is opposite Knights Plant Centre where you can buy all manner of plants and also have lunches, tea and cake. For more information about our activities, exhibitions and how to join the DGA see [www.dga.org.uk](http://www.dga.org.uk), look at our Facebook page @dga4art, or get in touch at [contact@dga.org.uk](mailto:contact@dga.org.uk).

Angela Hall, Chair,  
Dorking Group of Artists  
Email: [contact@dga.org.uk](mailto:contact@dga.org.uk)



Pauline Allbeury



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# DORKING STOOLBALL CLUB



## Calling all women in need of a new summer sport!



Dorking Stoolball Club is a friendly club that plays at Westcott Cricket Club

one to two evenings a week during the summer.

## But what exactly is stoolball, you ask?

Stoolball is an ancient bat-and-ball game often considered a precursor to modern cricket, played primarily in Sussex, Kent, and Surrey. A combination of cricket and rounders, it is a great sport for women and the Surrey league have 9 teams. We also play other counties. If you can run, throw and catch a ball or wield a wooden bat, then it is the sport for you! It is a lovely way to keep fit and is very sociable.

## History of the sport

The earliest known references date back to the 1400s, when it was played in churchyards and on village greens. Shakespeare referred to the game in one of his plays and 'playing stoolball' was accepted as a euphemism for sexual behaviour! It is believed to have been initially played by milkmaids using their milking stools as wickets with a batter defending a stool using a wooden bat, evolving over time into a game with structured rules and competitive matches.

Stoolball was associated with women, as it was one of the few ball games they were encouraged to play in medieval and early modern England. However, it was also played by men, and records indicate that even royalty, including King Charles II, showed an interest.



Today, stoolball remains a niche sport, with leagues and clubs primarily based in Sussex, where the game is a cherished part of local heritage. Modern stoolball has codified rules and is enjoyed as a recreational and competitive sport, preserving a tradition that has lasted for over 500 years.

Come and give it a try, ladies! Our friendly team welcomes players of all ages, from 14 to 80, so there's no excuse not to join in. It's a great way to enjoy an evening outdoors, close to home, while having fun and socialising. Our first training session kicks off on April 22nd, 6.15pm, at our home ground, Westcott Cricket Club - we'd love to see you there! Any questions please give me a call on 07866 777643

**Suellen Peskett**

Photos courtesy of Stoolball England

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# GREEN WESTCOTT

## We All Have a Part to Play

We all belong to the community of life here on Earth. We are an interconnected and interdependent part of the web of life and all have our part to play in helping life thrive. One simple way to engage with this is by taking part in one, or more, of the many citizen science projects that are invaluable in supporting the work of wildlife and conservation organisations. Information from the projects help scientists to build a fuller picture of the things that hinder or help life to flourish.

Taking part is free! It is a great opportunity to focus your attention on the intricate and fascinating ways in which, for example, creatures and plants interact with one another, and to learn more about the abundant beauty and rich diversity of life. No particular skills are required and organisers provide identification resources and other information you might need to take part. Many thanks to Babs, who suggested the idea of writing about some of the following projects that people might like to get involved with over the coming months. Getting involved, learning new things and taking time to stop and notice the world around us, are all things that make us happier! With the wide variety of citizen science projects running throughout the year, there should be

something that piques the interest of everyone!

### **December to May:** *PondNet Spawn Survey*

Help the  
Freshwater  
Habitat Trust  
to better  
understand  
when and  
where frogs and  
toads are breeding across the UK.



### **March to May:** *FruitWatch*

Help is needed in gathering information on when fruit trees are flowering, to understand how climate change is impacting pollination and fruit production.

### **April to October:** *Bat Sunset Survey*

No need for previous experience, just spend an hour from sunset (or before sunrise) with family/friends and discover bats and other wildlife in your local area. Let the Bat Conservation Trust know what you see.

### **25th April to 1st May:** *Big River Watch*

The Rivers Trust say that only 15% of river stretches in England are in good overall health. This survey invites people to take part in a simple activity to help build a picture of river health throughout the UK and Ireland.

More locally, the River Mole River Watch team of volunteers collect

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## GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

water samples to test for pollutants and highlight areas of concern, with the aim of restoring our local river to a thriving ecological state.

### **May to October:** *Blackbirds in Gardens*

The British Trust for Ornithology is appealing for people to take part in a survey to



record blackbird numbers across the UK. This is because birdwatchers have reported a decline in blackbird numbers in London, thought to be due to the mosquito-borne Usutu virus which has spread northwards due to climate change.

### **7th & 8th June:** *Pondwatch*

A social-media campaign by the British Dragonfly Society in which they are encouraging everyone to get out and explore their local ponds and share photos and stories on social media #Pondwatch

### **18th July to 10th August:** *Big Butterfly Count*



Butterfly Conservation's 2024 count raised the alarm on a big decline

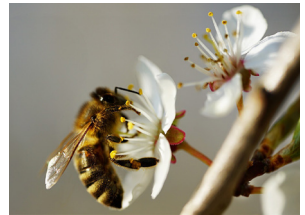
in butterfly numbers and led to the declaration of a butterfly emergency. So this year's count is hugely important

in determining how this key indicator species is faring.

**All year:** the British Trust for Ornithology has a number of other projects running throughout the year. Visit their website and look under the 'How You Can Help' tab to see current bird monitoring projects.

### *The UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme*

B e e s ,  
hoverflies  
and other  
f l o w e r -  
v i s i t i n g  
i n s e c t s  
are vitally



important for pollinating food crops and are facing many challenges from pesticide use to climate change. UKPOMS has ongoing projects to improve understanding of how to best protect pollinators and restore their populations.

More information on all these citizen science projects can be found using the internet. If you are unable to access the internet, or download specific apps to report findings, please get in touch with us at [info@greenwestcott.org](mailto:info@greenwestcott.org) for help with finding information or submitting data.

Fully linked and referenced article at [www.greenwestcott.org/blog](http://www.greenwestcott.org/blog)

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