

**March 2024**

[www.whaddon.org](http://www.whaddon.org)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

6th March	Coffee morning Sustainable Whaddon Meeting	22nd April	Annual Parish Meeting (TBC)
9th March	Posy making	28th April	Cricket
10th March	Mothering Sunday	1st May	Coffee morning
11th March	Parish Council	12th May	Cricket
13th March	Golf Quiz	13th May	Parish Council Newsletter Deadline
20th March	Coffee morning	15th May	Coffee morning
31st March	Easter Sunday	17th May	Beer Festival
3rd April	Coffee morning	18th May	Beer Festival Folk Evening
8th April	Parish Council	19th May	Whit Sunday Events
17th April	Coffee morning	5th June	Coffee morning
21st April	Cricket	13th July	Village Fete

### **NEWSLETTER**

*The deadline for the next newsletter is **13th May**. Items of local interest are always welcome.*

*Joan Pascoe C 208062  
joanpascoe@aol.com*

### **VILLAGE HALL HIRE**

Special rates for those within the village - ideal for birthday parties and most functions.

Village Rate: £9 per hr  
Non-village Rate: £15 per hr

Please contact:  
[whaddonhalltrust@whaddon.org](mailto:whaddonhalltrust@whaddon.org)

### **BIN COLLECTION DATES**

Thurs 7 Mar	Black	Thurs 25 Apr	Blue/green
Thurs 14 Mar	Blue/green	Thurs 2 May	Black
Thurs 21 Mar	Black	Thurs 9 May	Blue/green
Thurs 28 Mar	Blue/green	Thurs 16 May	Black
Thurs 4 Apr	Black	Thurs 23 May	Blue/green
Thurs 11 Apr	Blue/green	Thurs 30 May	Black
Thurs 18 Apr	Black	Thurs 6 June	Blue/green

### **Mobile Library**

Every 4th Wednesday  
10.00 - 10.30  
Meldreth Road

Wednesday 27 March

Wednesday 24 April

Wednesday 22 May

## Whaddon Village Fete, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2024

The Village Fete Committee has started planning for this year's Whaddon Village Fete which will take place on the **Recreation Ground** on the afternoon of **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July**. The aim is to build on the success of last year's inaugural village fete and to provide an event for the whole village, as well as visitors from the surrounding area. One of the disappointments of last year's show was the small number of entries to the Produce Show, and the almost complete lack of entries from children. In the hope of attracting more entries, and including devising entry categories that will appeal to children, we are reviewing and updating the Produce Show entry categories. The categories for this year's show will be set out on a flyer that will be distributed to all households during March.

Delivering a successful fete will require the input of a significant group of helpers. Assistance will be needed in setting up the fete on the evening before, setting up and running stalls on the day, and then clearing everything away afterwards. The committee are extremely grateful to all those who helped last year, but many hands make light work and it would be much appreciated if more villagers might consider lending a hand. If you are able to get involved with this year's fete, please contact any member of the fete committee listed below.

Fete Committee: Anita and Jonathan Birch, Karen Coningsby, Nikki Cross, David Grech, Deborah Townsend, Caroline Trotter, David Short.

## Sustainable Whaddon

Sustainable Whaddon is a new environment group for the village. We will be taking our lead from the environmental priorities identified in the recent village plan. This includes, the promotion of wildlife areas, tree planting, wildlife friendly gardening, reducing our individual and community carbon footprint, recycling, rewilding, sustainable transport, renewable energy, to name but a few.

Our inaugural meeting is taking place on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March**, 7.00pm at 114 Bridge Street. Please come along, find out more and see how you can get involved.

Further details: Paul Evans. [Paulevans13@btinternet.com](mailto:Paulevans13@btinternet.com) or 07876117796

### Friends or tradesmen visiting ?

The roads through our village are not that wide so it may be safer for their cars or vans to be parked off the road either on your drive or, if that's not possible, in the village hall car park for the day.



## Spring at the Golf Centre.

Happy 2024. After a very wet start to the year the course has been drying out nicely. At time of writing our snowdrops are looking impressive and our spring bulbs are all emerging.

We have had some great quizzes this year, our final of the season is on Wednesday 13 March, please book your team.

Easter egg hunt on Saturday 30 March £5 per child includes egg hunt, games and an Easter gift. Look out for the Easter Bunny!

We welcome back the delicious Slice of Price pizza to Whaddon on Friday 12 April and Friday 28 June.

At Whitsun we are holding our very popular Real Ale Festival. This will be 17, 18, 19 May to coincide with the village Whitsun celebration and Morris Dancing.

Don't forget you can also pop into the Golf Centre's licensed clubhouse for coffee, ice cream, a lunch or just a chat. Well behaved dogs are always welcome but please keep to the footpath and pick up after your dog.

Look forward to seeing you all soon.

Lorna and Richard.



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# Whaddon Whitsun 2024, 18–19 May

We are delighted to inform you all that Whaddon Whitsun is continuing as usual in 2024.

## So write the date in your diaries now: 18–19 May 2024

In 2024 Whitsun is **NOT** the same as the Late May Bank Holiday. Fuller details will be available nearer the time at <https://www.whaddon.org/whitsun>.

Saturday evening (**18 May**) will take the usual form of a Folk Evening in the Village Hall from 19:30 to 23:00. There will be folk music, country dancing and Morris dancing to complement the food and drink available—all is included in the price of the ticket. Don't miss the performance of the village's very own Whitsun Song!

Sunday (**19 May**) we will be processing from Meldreth Road and Dyer's Green with Morris dance spots on the way, starting at about 10:15. Both processions will meet for a combined show at the Village Hall before going up to St Mary's church for the Whitsun service at 12:30. The Whitsun Song will be sung in the church, and there will be Morris dancing. This will be followed by more dancing at the Golf Centre, where there will be the usual beer festival.

We are hopeful that our old friends from Huddersfield, the White Rose Morris Men, will be able to come this year, along with the regular local Morris teams of Manor Mill Morris and the Devil's Dyke Morris Men. More precise details, including timings, will be shared as we get the event organised.

We would love to see as many villagers as possible over the course of this weekend, especially those who are new to the village. If you want to know more about the history of the Whitsun celebrations here in Whaddon, there is an article about it on the village web site:

<https://www.whaddon.org/whitsun> -- follow the "About" tab.

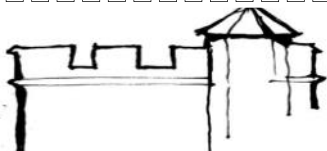
We look forward to seeing you.

Helen and Nigel Strudwick

[whitsun@whaddon.org](mailto:whitsun@whaddon.org)

## Village Fete Plant Stall

Now that spring is upon us many of us will be sowing seeds to stock our gardens for the coming summer. The plant stall at the village fete is always very popular so please can you think about sowing a few extra seeds to donate to the stall in July. Any variety of plant will be very welcome from annuals, perennials, and even vegetable plants. The spring is also the time for splitting any large clumps of plants in the garden so do think about potting up any unwanted plants as well.



## ST MARY'S CHURCH WHADDON

### CHURCH SERVICES

10th March	<b>Mothering Sunday</b>	9.30am	St Mary's Whaddon
14th March	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	7.30pm	Bassingbourn
24th March	<b>Palm Sunday</b>	9.30am	St Mary's Whaddon
28th March	<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	7.30pm	Bassingbourn
31st March	<b>Easter Sunday</b> Sunrise Service	6.30am	Field opposite the church
	Holy Communion	9.30am	St Mary's Whaddon
28th April	Holy Communion followed by APCM	9.30am	St Mary's Whaddon
19th May	<b>Whit Sunday Service</b>	12.30pm	St Mary's Whaddon

### MOTHERING SUNDAY POSIES

**Saturday 9th March**

Posy making in the church around 10.30am. All children, accompanied with a parent, are welcome to come and help make the posies. More hands make light work.

Please come and join us.



### A Story in Stone

It was wonderful to have an almost full Village Hall for my talk on 24<sup>th</sup> January, in which I traced the story of English Architecture through 25 properties in the care of English Heritage. The evening raised £369 towards the heating fund at St Mary's, which hopefully we will be able to translate into a couple of new radiators at the west end of the church later in the year! Very many thanks to all who turned out on a cold January evening to support this event.

David Grech

### Contact Details for Rev. Helen Orr

Tel: 07761 241190 Email: [vicar@whaddon.org](mailto:vicar@whaddon.org)

My days in the parishes are Tuesday and Thursdays and weekend services



## WHADDON GOLF CENTRE



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Tel: 07593 853189

[bassingbourncommunity.library@  
gmail.com](mailto:bassingbourncommunity.library@gmail.com)

### **Table Tennis in the Village Hall**

**Tuesdays 20:00 to 21:00**



Table tennis takes place weekly on Tuesday evenings at the village hall. There are about half a dozen regular players.

We have two table tennis tables and other equipment is provided. The cost is £2.00 per person per week.

Anyone who would like to join us are very welcome . An hour of fun and exercise and an opportunity to meet other villagers.

Those interested please contact Nigel Strudwick, [ncs3@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ncs3@cam.ac.uk)

Hope to see some new faces soon!

## Whaddon Cricket Club Report for 2023

For the third year running the mighty WCC achieved more wins than losses, with 6 victories and 4 losses, our second best season after 2021. First up was a new opponent, Longstowe away. A beautiful ground, with a blossom and church surround, and a fine understanding that made a tight match out of a potential mismatch. Everyone batted, everyone bowled (note to all who would like to play for Whaddon: we guarantee that you will not field at long-stop without relief). Longstowe got off to a fine start, before Hairbear Bunch George reeled them back in with 3 wickets; a weak WCC start at 39 for 7 was retrieved by Luke Tyson who batted for ages (mostly dots) and your beloved captain (unbeaten on 36). But we fell 18 runs short when Jason Lightyear tried to hit the church steeple. He missed.

The series against Sandon followed a predictable pattern: we win at home by a whisker (Jason and No-mullet Miles both scoring heavily, with Jason doing the damage with the ball); and we lose away, when we feel we should have won. However WhazBall and hubris with the bat leads to early obliteration, after a fine bowling display (Jason with 3 wickets again). We need to channel our inner Boycott when we return for the 2024 episode.

A rare loss in the bright sunshine against the Huffer XI by 13 runs, in spite of a fine 50 run partnership between RVP and Miles, spinning wizardry from Père Benyan and champagne moment Sarnt Major Burgess bowling the Huffmeister, was

followed by a most satisfying thumping win against Bassingbourn on a boiling June afternoon, reaching the 120 runs required off only 16 overs, 14 short of the allotment. The wickets were shared around (11 bowlers!), but the second 50 run partnership of the year between Cosmo Lara and Crash Green was a thing of beauty, with the running between the wickets belying the tightness of his shorts later on at the cricket dinner. We were all grateful of the early release to the Hoops.

Royston Dads (aka Johnson Matthey) were seen off in short order, the WCC again reaching the required score with a dozen overs unused after a joint Benyan double-retirement masterclass. David best-bowler-in-the-family Green did the damage with the ball (no sartorial problem with his shorts). This was followed by a very satisfying hammering of Guilden Morden. Only one of their players made double figures with all WCC bowlers chipping in, a modest target of 75 was made difficult by 4 ducks. Crash and Miles however proved that Whazball is not dead and a flurry of boundaries guided us to safety with 10 overs to spare.

I can't really remember the next game against Royston as the scoring was done on some official website and no-one wrote anything in the book. That's probably why Your Beloved Captain top-scored and remained unbeaten, because no-one can prove I didn't. So there. We won, in case you were wondering. And so onto Cantabs, the burly burlesques of the back row. Now



this was a close one: WCC reached an unedifying 38 for 7 after 17 overs, before the senior gentry in the shape of YBC and the Huffmeister not only steadied the ship, but attached an outboard motor, reaching 112 from our allotted 30 overs. Thankfully those that couldn't row their way out of a bath turned up to bowl and devastation flowed from the hands of Jason, Crash, Graham and HNB, who topped it off with a rare maiden. I should mention Ollie Loved-up Townsend, the Cantabs captain who bowled 2 overs, 1 wicket, no runs. Odd how he does that when he is playing against us...

A new opponent in Camceylon was our sobering end to the season's festivities, one of whose players used to play in the first class league in Sri Lanka. We were totally whooped, only HNB making double figures with the willow. The Sri Lanka ladies, who accompanied their menfolk and provided a fine curry, also completed the scorebook. It will shortly be on display in the Fitzwilliam Museum, so beautifully was it compiled.

But before I go, of course we have to mention THE match: the Churchians vs the Bridgians. After much hype and

skulduggery and upfront complaints and general shiftiness, God's Own Warriors (i.e. Church Street) came out on top once more, leaving the Pontoon makers trailing in their wake. Church St racked up 165 for 6 (Benyan x 3, George, Stevie Cross not quite chipping in with a very round score), with Bridge St sharing the wickets among 6 bowlers. La Rue du Pont started well, at 43 for 1, courtesy of some fine pre-loved-up boundary hitting by Ollie. But thereafter only David best-batsman-in-the-family Green and Welsh Bob got into double figures. Church St shared the wickets among 7 bowlers. Which just goes to show a) we have a lot of bowlers b) we are bad at batting if that rabble can take that many wickets. Bridge St capitulated 42 runs short, so we all went to the Golf Club to drink awful concoctions.

A big thank you to Helen as ever for her scoring, to Karen for her scoreboarding (like waterboarding but less wet), and to Mark Newberry for his tireless mowing/line-painting/sledging of Church St.

*Peter Haselden*

### **N. HERTS AND DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

The **Royston** office is open **Monday** and **Wednesday** 9.30am to 12 noon.

To contact the local CAB please call 01462 689801 and leave a message or email [northhertscab.org.uk](mailto:northhertscab.org.uk)

The CAB also hold a session at the **Melbourn Hub** on **Wednesdays** 9.30am to 11.30am. No need to book - just drop in.

Alternatively contact the CAB national phone service: Tel 0800 144 8848.

## Whaddon Cricket Club 2024 - Fixtures

DATE	MATCH	VENUE
21 April	Longstowe	Away
28 April	Steeple Morden	Away (TBC)
12 May	Sandon	Home
23 June	Camceylon	Home
30 June	Sandon	Away
7 July	Huffer XI	Home
14 July	Roytson Dads	Home
21 July	Guilden Morden	Home
28 July	Hare Street	Home
4 August	Cantabs	Home (TBC)
18 August	Train Boys	Home (TBC)
1 September	Church St v Bridge St	Home
8 September	Hare Street	Away

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## Coffee Mornings



Held on the first and third Wednesdays of every month in the village hall, these are proving ever popular with up to 20 people attending some sessions. The price remains at £1.50 for a cup of tea or coffee and a piece of homemade cake – where else can you get such a bargain?! The finances are very healthy and will be used to hold a summer lunch party on 17<sup>th</sup> July this year. More details will follow nearer the time.

Each session runs between 10.30am and 12.00pm and the dates for the remainder of the year are:-

March 6 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup>	August 7 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup>
April 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup>	September 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup>
May 1 <sup>st</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup>	October 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup>
June 5 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup>	November 6 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup>
July 3 <sup>rd</sup> . Summer lunch party on 17 <sup>th</sup> .	December 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> .

## David and Mark Green

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**Mark**

Mobile: 07895530892

Email: [Markgreen880@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Markgreen880@yahoo.co.uk)

# TIMES PAST

## Bassingbourn Airfield (2)

### *1945 to closure*

This article will look at life at Bassingbourn from the departure of the American Air Force, its transfer to the Army in January 1970 and its eventual closure in 2013.

With the ending of the war in Europe, the American Air Force departed Bassingbourn quickly from 25<sup>th</sup> June 1945. The RAF returned the next day, although they officially took over on 10<sup>th</sup> July. This was not to be entirely the end of the Americans at Bassingbourn though – see later.

With its long runways, Bassingbourn became one of the main bases for long range RAF Transport Command aircraft. 102 Squadron was one of the first to fly from the base between September 1945 and February 1946. The squadron, ironically, flew American built Consolidated Liberators, which were large four-engined former bombers that had been converted to a transport role after the end of the war in the Far East. One of the squadron's main tasks was to return troops and prisoners of war from India. Another squadron that flew briefly from Bassingbourn in autumn 1945, was the Australian 466 Squadron, which was converting from Halifax bombers to Liberators but it was disbanded on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

With the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 and 1949, Bassingbourn's Avro York, Avro Lancaster and Douglas Dakota aircraft all took part in the massive operation to transport essential commodities to the beleaguered city.



*A photo (taken at Duxford in 2015) which shows a Flying Fortress (left), a Liberator (rear) and a Dakota (centre), three planes that all flew from Bassingbourn in the 1940s.*

*Copyright Lee Ginger*

### **Return of the Americans (briefly!)**

During the late 1940s, the United States Air Force began rotating deployments of Strategic Air Command Boeing B-29 and Boeing B-50 Superfortresses' squadrons to the United Kingdom as 'Show of Force' deployments. These were designed to send a message to the Soviet Union that despite the Berlin Airlift and Korean War, the United States was prepared to respond with atomic weapons to any Soviet aggression in Western Europe. As a result, this brought American heavy bombers back to Bassingbourn for short periods, although the RAF were always in command of the base.

These deployments were only from August 1950 to May 1951 at Bassingbourn. It is unknown if any United States atomic weapons were ever deployed to the United Kingdom.

## Into the jet era



In February 1952 RAF Bassingbourn received its first allocation of Canberra bombers and became the first jet bomber operational conversion unit (OCU) in the world. The Canberras operated from Bassingbourn for seventeen years. Unfortunately during their time at Bassingbourn, several of them crashed in the local area. One was an aircraft that overshot the runway on 24<sup>th</sup>

July 1957 and killed its three Indian Air force flyers. A second crash on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1957, was one mile ENE of the airport and killed the pilot. A third crash severely damaged a house at Steeple Morden on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1967 and killed its three airmen. In addition there are records of at least two other Bassingbourn based Canberra crashes - in Suffolk and Hertfordshire. It is fair to say that by modern standards these aircraft had a poor safety record.

From 1963 to 1969, the Joint School of Photographic Interpretation was also based at Bassingbourn. The end of Bassingbourn as an RAF air base was officially on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1969, when the final RAF Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader A. M. McGregor handed over the keys to the Army.

## Under new ownership

Bassingbourn opened as an Army barracks or 'depot' in January 1970 and was responsible for training recruits undergoing their 19-week basic training before joining a regular battalion of the Queen's Regiment, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Royal Anglian Regiment. The depot also trained Junior Bandsmen, Junior Drummers and Junior Infantrymen on 18-month and two-year courses. From 1970 to 1985 recruits of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC) and, from 1985, those of the Royal Pioneer Corps, were also trained at Bassingbourn.

In 1993 the Barracks became the home of the 'Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn'. The Barracks has kept its RAF links by becoming the home of 2484 (Bassingbourn) Squadron Air Training Corps, which continues to be based there today.

When the Army took over the base, the main runway was shortened and none of the three runways are now currently useable. There also used to be a set of traffic lights on the A1198 which would stop traffic when aircraft were landing/taking off across the road but these were also taken away, probably at the end of the 1970s. Apart from these changes and adapting the buildings and hangars for army use, little else has changed at the base.

## Hollywood at Bassingbourn

The base and its locality were featured in the documentary film *Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress*. One of the Memphis Belle's propellers stands to greet you at the gatehouse on entering the Barracks today. The airfield and group were also the

subject of a series of newspaper articles written by John Steinbeck during the spring and summer of 1943. Captain Clark Gable had temporary duty at Bassingbourn while producing a gunnery film for the USAAF. It also served as the location for the fictional "28th Bomb Group" in the



*Memphis Belle Memorial*

1950 Humphrey Bogart film *Chain Lightning*. Away from Hollywood, but still in the movies, RAF Bassingbourn was also the setting for the Airfield-based shots in the 1955 film, *The Dambusters*, featuring Richard Todd and Michael Redgrave. In 1986/7 Stanley Kubrick used the barracks as the base Parris Island in his film, *Full Metal Jacket*. The fake palm trees were there for a few years afterwards!

### **Bassingbourn Anglo-American Air Festival 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> May 1978**

This big air show marked the end of flying at Bassingbourn and there was very little air activity after this except for helicopters (which of course continue to visit the base to this very day). It was an exceptionally hot weekend which helped to attract huge crowds and created enormous traffic congestion in the local area, especially on the A1198 (which was still numbered the A14 in 1978). Remarkably, only one Spitfire took part as did the Red Arrows and many other aircraft, most of which have long been preserved or withdrawn from service. One notable aircraft that took part though, was one of the early American Air Force F-15s, which are still based locally at Lakenheath in Suffolk. Proceeds from the Air Show went to the Forces Charities.

### **Closure**

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012, led by the Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers, the last 76 soldiers marched off the parade square in front of a crowd of 800 family members and friends after completing the 14-week course which combined vocational education and military training. The Army finally vacated the base at the end of March 2013 and there then followed five years of closure and uncertainty.



*Final passing out parade*

*To be continued - The Libyans to present day MRTC*  
*Lee Ginger*

## **Tidying-up Around the Bridge Street Fountain**

Some of you will have noticed that the planting around the Bridge Street fountain has recently been cut back. It is now 20 years since we moved into Spring Cottage behind the fountain and, over that time, the planting has been allowed to grow more-or-less unchecked.

A recent inspection revealed brambles running rampant, some dead wood covered in ivy, and a couple of ash saplings that had reached the overhead wires, and clearly the time had come to give the area a trim.

We are indebted to the heroics from Loretta and Tony in helping us with this task and, for those of you who liked the 'secret garden' character of the overgrown foliage, rest assured it will be allowed to grow back.

We now plan to change the fencing between Spring Cottage and the fountain to black metal railings, similar to those put in by the Parish Council around the front of the fountain. I recall that was something Ted Webb was always keen to see; clearly some plans take a little longer to come to fruition!

Jenny and David Grech



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phone: 01223 208527.



## Whaddon Parish Council Matters

### Parish precept for 2024-25

The Parish Precept is the amount of council tax money that the Parish Council needs to 'run' the village effectively. This includes maintenance, grass cutting, administration and small improvements. Last year we managed to keep the rate at roughly the same as it has been for the past five years but the PC warned that we were unlikely to keep it at that level for this year.

Our reserves have now reduced to about four months' worth of our annual precept (Parish Councils should hold between three and twelve months in reserve) and our annual budget is under pressure from hefty inflationary cost increases. We also need to add a little to our reserves so that we can help fund some of the projects that villagers identified in last year's Parish Plan.

After a thorough review of our current finances, at our meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January, we decided to increase the Parish Precept by 10%. This means that a 'B and D' equivalent property will rise from £79.88 to £87.87 for the year, giving a total Parish Precept amount of £19,313 for 2024-25. This is an increase of fifteen pence per week for B and D properties and gives the Parish Council a small increase and takes our reserves to about five months of our annual precept. We are sorry that there has had to be any increase, especially at present, but we cannot allow the village finances to slide into difficulties.

### Whaddon Parish Plan

The new 'Sustainable Whaddon' group attended the Parish Council meeting in February and we had a good discussion on sustainability, wildflowers, verge cutting and environmental issues. The PC will be considering calling a Climate Emergency at our March meeting. There will be a public meeting of the group in early March and they will also speak at the Annual Parish Meeting at the end of April. The PC have also planted seven small trees around the village in early February. Watch for further news in the village email and newsletter on the Sustainable Whaddon progress.

### Speed awareness signs

The PC are purchasing two further flashing speed awareness signs for use around the village and also at Whaddon Gap on the A1198. We'd always agreed to place a semi-permanent flashing speed sign on the A1198 to complement the new road scheme and this will be solar powered. The other sign will be battery powered and will be used in conjunction with our existing sign in various locations around the village, which will allow us to warn twice as many motorists and also to collect more data on speeding. It was clear from the Parish Plan questionnaire that many villagers are concerned about speeding and there was strong support for additional speed awareness signs, which do seem to have a very positive effect.



## Byway 22

Extra posts have been placed to stop people driving around the width restriction posts. This seems to have solved the problem. Generally, the scheme has increased safety for walkers, cyclists and horse riders who use this route frequently.

## Weedkilling along the edge of our roads

After a massive outcry from residents, councillors and many other people, County Highways have relented and will be resuming weedkilling along the edge of our roads from this year, provided a Parish wants it to continue. We have asked for it to continue in Whaddon. Highways even recognized that the whole scheme had been poorly managed!

## Potholes

While we were fortunate in having our road resurfaced last year and, as a result, have few potholes in Whaddon, the PC has been approached by a number of villagers complaining about the dreadful state of Station Road in Melbourn! Many Whaddon villagers drive or cycle along this road and the surface is truly shocking and very dangerous. I have complained to County Highways in the strongest terms, as have our District and County Councillors but we are being fobbed off with lame excuses. This is a busy section of road and I urge villagers to feel free in adding their voices to this campaign.

## Parish Council meetings

These normally take place on the second Monday of each month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. The next meeting will be held on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024**.

Minutes of PC meetings are on the village website [www.whaddon.org](http://www.whaddon.org) and on the noticeboard at the Village Hall in Church Street.

*Compiled by Lee Ginger*

### REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Monday	17.00 - 19.00	Knit and Natter
Tuesday	17.45 - 19.15 20.00 - 21.00	Dog Training Table Tennis
Wednesday	10.30 - 12.00	Coffee morning (1st & 3rd Wed )
Thursday	18.25 - 20.25	Pilates
Friday	17.45 - 19.15 20.00 - 22.00	Dog training Royston & District Model Railway Club

## NATURE NOTES

### March 2024

It may seem a funny month to introduce the concept of New Year's Day, but although Julius Caesar fixed the date as being 1<sup>st</sup> January in 45 BC (after Janus, the two-faced Roman god, that looked both forwards and backwards), this did not endure. Christians wanted to celebrate the New Year marking Jesus' life and death. An abbot, Dionysius Exiguus (who brought us B.C. & A.D. in his reform of the calendar), fixed upon 25<sup>th</sup> March as being the day of Jesus' crucifixion and death and, as they believed that he was conceived and died on the same day of the year, it was determined in A.D. 527 as both New Year's Day and the Day of Annunciation (when the angel Gabriel visited Mary). This lasted until the British Empire adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1751 (169 years after Pope Gregory XIII introduced it for the rest of Europe – we didn't like change in those days!) and January 1<sup>st</sup> once again became New Year's Day. It is funny to think that for centuries, we celebrated New Year's Day to the song of the Skylark towering above newly planted fields, and chiffchaff, newly arrived from Africa, and furious nest-building wherever one looked. (Brief aside: don't be surprised if you hear this perpetual light tap-tap-tap, like a pencil being tapped against a hollow wooden box. Both great tits and blue tits have this curious habit of tapping their beak against the outside of their nest box, near the entrance hole. No one knows why they do it, for it is not to widen the entrance. Perhaps, like the woodpecker, it is to summon a mate, but I think they do it even when their mate is already laying).

And in the third week of March, the annual weeds start growing, and gosh, don't we have to keep up! None are more pernicious than the hairy bittercress, with small inconspicuous rosettes of leaves that can flower and set seed in four weeks. Frost hardy, it survives winter too. A member of the Brassica family, like kale

and broccoli, bittercress is edible, with a peppery flavour that works well with salads (I am told. No, I haven't.). Also known as lamb's cress or land cress or spring cress or, brilliantly, flick-weed and shot-weed for its explosive seed disposal.



Hairy bittercress

March is also a month of “varied” weather, with snow falls, gales often and sometimes *“curtains of sweet spring rain.... (and) Lent pauses in its severities to accommodate Mothering Sunday,”* (Ronald Blythe: Out of the Valley) and then wonderful “Daffodil days” of 15°C to 20°C days, when Mothering Sunday is honoured with jewels of violets, hyacinths, primrose, and scylla all scattered through our borders and lawns, and the repetitive call of the song thrush, urgent and evoking such a thrill in your heart. Tennyson anthropomorphised the song thrush's call with *“Summer is coming. Summer is coming. Summer is coming. I know it. I know it. I know it. Light again. Leaf again. Life again. Love again. Yes, my wild little poet”*.

That wonderful logophile, Susie Dent, remarks that the vernal equinox (this year on 20<sup>th</sup> March, when day and night are of equal length) is a time when buds are *“erumpent”*! Certainly, the hawthorn buds are swelling ready for leaf burst and our weeping willows are a glorious yellow in the sunshine. The elm has already flowered earlier this month, inconspicuously, and the ash trees too. Ash trees have a complex reproductive system. The flowers may be male, female or bisexual (they are *dioecious*). In any population, some trees have only male

flowers and produce pollen, some only female flowers and produce seeds and some have bisexual flowers and produce pollen and seeds. You will notice these flowers as small, light green to purple, with no petals that grow in loose panicles at the tips of the twigs.



Inconspicuous is not a word one could use for the sight of the flowering cherry plum and wild plum this month, and nor for the sight of brimstone butterflies and red admirals dashing about your garden.

Cock pheasants are clearly noticing that spring is around the corner. Our resident male's crowing for a mate, sparks a response from all the other cock pheasants around us. And when they are sparring, trying to rake each other's breast with their spurs, their wattles are engorged with blood and, through binoculars, you can see that their pupils are dilated, and so look black, with just the thinnest border of the yellow iris.

Humans too can feel a renewal of energy, known as Spring Fever or *vernalagnia* from the Latin *vernalis*, "relating to Spring" and *lagnia*, "lust". It is all about the increasing hours of sunlight.

Florence Nightingale noted that her wounded soldiers that lay facing a window, recovered more quickly and more completely. "It is not only light, but direct sunlight they want," she wrote, and science has since proven that sunlight indeed strengthens the immune system and increases our levels of serotonin.

And if only all March was sunshine and gentle breezes. But it is not. The rain will soak the earth and walking the footpath

from Ashwell Street to Clunchpit Wood, we will find the ground "loving" i.e. clinging. And then there will be long days of wind to dry the soil out. But mark the spots of sun we find at our feet. Bright lesser celandine in the verges and marsh marigolds or kingcups in the ponds. Their scientific name is *Caltha palustris*, *Caltha* for "Goblet".



The close of the month brings us Passiontide, with Easter on its very last day, Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>. If you come to Church around Easter, you will walk through stands of ancient gravestones, all covered in lichen, those living stains that have erased the names of the dead and dates of their living. Lichen are cryptogamia, not because they like crypts, but from the Greek for "hidden reproduction", referring to the fact that no seed is produced. They spread asexually, with pieces of lichen breaking off and finding a new home on a blackbird's foot or lift of a breeze. These are fascinating creatures since they are not made up of a single organism but are a stable symbiotic community of both a fungus and an algae. The lichen fungus requires carbon as a food source which is provided by the photosynthetic algae.

And to end with the heavens, we circle back to New Year's Day. The Worm Moon shines on 25<sup>th</sup> March. The worms in your garden are suffering from their own form of *vernalagnia*, breeding every 27 days from mating to egg laying, with baby worms hatching and emerging from the cocoon into the soil in two to three weeks. Worms can double their population every 60 days.

*Perry Littleboy, Bassingbourn*

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## **HOME GROWN PLANTS**

We grow the majority of our plants on site either from seed or British grown plugs in peat free compost supplied by our sister site Bury Lane Farm in Melbourn.

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**QUIZ NIGHT**

Saturday 2nd March 2024  
Arrive 6.45pm for 7.30 pm start  
at

**Meldreth Village Hall**

Teams of up to 6 people welcome  
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**LITERARY LUNCH**

Thursday 25th April 2024  
The Old Bull Inn, Royston  
Buffet lunch from 12.15 pm  
Chat and Q&A from 1.00 pm  
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*in conversation with*

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**PILATES MAT CLASSES & ONE TO ONE SESSIONS**

**SUSAN VAN de VEN Cambridgeshire County Councillor**

**Zoom Cuppa Surgeries: Mondays 5 - 6PM**

If you'd like to meet with your councillors by Zoom, to bring any concerns or ask any questions, please come along to our weekly Zoom Cuppa Surgery, on Mondays from 5-6 PM. Please contact us for a link:

[Sallyannhart@riskingonpurpose.com](mailto:Sallyannhart@riskingonpurpose.com).

Alternatively, you can contact Susan on 07905325574 or email [susanvandeven5@gmail.com](mailto:susanvandeven5@gmail.com)

**Monthly Newsletter:**

Susan writes a monthly e-newsletter on issues affecting our area – please do let her know if you'd like to receive it, or would like anything to be included in it. Susan van de Ven County Councillor for Bassingbourn, Melbourn, Meldreth and Whaddon.

**ANTHONY BROWNE MP**

Surgeries are regularly held and can be booked by email, telephone or letter.

**Email:** [Anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk)

**Tel:** 01223 603677

**Address:** Broadway House, 149-151 St Neots Road, Hardwick, CB23 7QJ



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## LIST OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

Mr Lee Ginger	Chair	07850 252015	lee.ginger@btinternet.com 14 Carlton Rise, Melbourn SG8 6BZ
Dr Nigel Strudwick	Vice Chair	C 207434	3 Town Farm Close
Mr Will Elbourn	Councillor	C 208955	College Farm, Church Street
Anita Birch	Councillor	07748 908164	68 Bridge Street
Joanne Hart	Councillor	C208009	108 Church Street
Deborah Townsend	Councillor	07388 033616	36 Bridge Street
Claire Hales	Councillor	07901 523525	5 Bridge Street
Mrs Angela Bridges	Clerk/ Finance Officer	07565 381203	whaddonparishcclerk@outlook.com

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH TEAM

Malan Peyton	Whaddon Village Coordinator	Ermine Farm, Dyers Green	C 207358
<b>Coordinators:</b>			
Karen Coningsby	Meldreth Road/Church Corner	17 Church Street	C 207514
Carole Aldred	Church Street/Town Farm Close/ St Marys Close	104 Church Street	C 208147
Maria Mould	Lower Bridge Street / Ridgeway Close	39 Bridge Street	C 207231
Helen Smith	Upper Bridge Street	9 Bridge Street	C 207631
Malan Peyton	Dyers Green	Ermine Farm Dyers Green	C 207358

### Local Enforcement:

Neighbourhood Policing Team (Cambourne):

[www.cambs.police.uk/LocalPolicing/SouthCambs/Cambourne](http://www.cambs.police.uk/LocalPolicing/SouthCambs/Cambourne)

**Dial 999 to report a crime actually happening or when lives are at risk.**

For a non-emergency matter please consider using [www.cambs.police.uk/report](http://www.cambs.police.uk/report) or web chat **#safercambs** to report a crime. Both of these are likely to have a quicker response time than dialling 101.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### **Citizens Advice:**

Cambridge 03448 487979

Royston 03444 111444

### **Councillors:**

County: Susan van de Ven 07905 325574

District: Jose Hales 01763 221058

Sally Ann Hart 07791 233303

### **Doctors:**

Orchard Surgery, Melbourn 01763 260220

Granta Royston Health Centre 0300 2345555 option 7

Granta Market Hill Surgery, Royston 0300 2345555 option 5

Roysia Surgery, Royston 01763 243166

### **Hospital:**

Addenbrooke's Hospital 01223 245151

### **Police:**

Non emergency Number 101

**Samaritans:** 01223 364455 (charges)

116 123 (free)

### **Transport:**

National Rail Enquiries 03457 484950

Stagecoach East 01223 433250

Myalls of Bassingbourn (Bus 17) 01763 243225

Centrebus (Bus 26) 0116 410 5050

### **Utilities:**

Anglian Water 03457 145145

Cambridge Water Company 01223 706050

Electricity Emergency & Supply Loss 08007 838838

### **Vets:**

Melbourne Veterinary Surgery 01763 262696

Royston Veterinary Surgery 01763 242221

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