

Westcott Village

Magazine

February 2025



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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

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

Copy deadline for
March issue:

8th February 2025

This magazine, published by the Church in Westcott, is printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited paper from a sustainable source. The views expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Church, Editor or Westcott residents.

FROM THE EDITOR



Hello to February! Hopefully we have snowdrops and crocus flowers now blooming with the daffodils starting to show, just to let us know that spring is round the corner. It's always more cheerful with some colour around us.

This month the coffee morning is back on 5th, the Gardeners' Club has a Race Night on 8th (see page 19), and the first village lunch will be held at St John's on 11th (p54 for more details),

with other events at St John's through the month (p59 for details), so there are no excuses for not getting out in the village in February.

There are also a few concerts at Dorking Halls, including the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines on 19th (p31), which I imagine will be stirring stuff!

I hope you enjoy the (slightly) longer days, and get to some of the village events this month.

Cath
editor@westcottmag.com



10th Birthday Party!

10

Save the date!

WESTfest
2015-2025

Sunday
22 June
2025

westfestsurrey@gmail.com
[@westfestsurrey](https://www.instagram.com/westfestsurrey)

A festive graphic for a 10th birthday party. It features a blue birthday cake with lit candles, a banner with colorful triangles, and a large '10' on a dark background with colorful confetti. The text '10th Birthday Party!' is written on a white banner. To the right, it says 'Save the date!' in purple, followed by 'WESTfest' in green and purple script, and '2015-2025' in purple. Below that, it says 'Sunday 22 June 2025' in purple. At the bottom, there is a white box with the email address 'westfestsurrey@gmail.com' and the Instagram handle '@westfestsurrey'.

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



ON BUILDING BLOCKS

One brilliant thing about our children is that they give me the excuse to play with a certain Danish plastic brick-based construction toy. Sometimes I even let them join in. I love the creative side of watching them create crazy things, but there is something deeply satisfying about seeing them open a new model, unfold a pristine instruction booklet, and work their way through it step by step to create a car/house/animal etc.

If only all of life was as simple as following a step-by-step instruction booklet. I often find myself longing for the simplicity of a brick-based construction kit. Because life is messy and complicated in all sorts of ways. Not least in when it comes to the realm of community and relationships.



Building meaningful community cannot be done with a kit, but takes time and, most importantly, trust. Britain, despite the tumultuous decade we have gone through, remains in general a high trust society with a high level of confidence in its institutions (a recent Gallup survey bore this out). But trust takes time to build and is all too easily broken – especially through misunderstanding and misinterpretation which reinforce negative

expectations.

Some questions for myself (you can ask them to yourself as well if you are in a pondering sort of mood): How can I put down building blocks of trust in my community, workplace and home? Who are the people that I have come to trust and what was it about them and what they did which led me to trust them? Who might I be misunderstanding or misreading which is getting in the way of trust and relationship and what can I do about it?

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

It matters, of course, who is doing the building. My 8-year-old would approach a construction kit in a very different way to my six month old (who would mainly try and consume the smaller pieces). One of my favourite verses in the Bible is Psalm 127.1 which says: 'Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.' As a Christian this principle reminds me of my limitations and short sightedness as I do my best to be a flawed but well-intentioned trust builder. All my experience cries out that when I trust myself things go wrong, and when I attempt to trust God – well that is where the beauty and hope ends up shining through despite my limitations.

Psalm 127.1 can be found written on the floor of Central Lobby in the Houses of Parliament. As a friend of mine who worked there observed, 'The Victorian architects quite literally built into the floor at the heart of our democracy a reminder that unless God is at work, we labour in vain.' I respect the fact that many of you



may think that the idea of God should be kept well away from parliament (this is definitely the stuff of a good pub conversation at the Prince of Wales if anyone is up for it) but I hope the principle that we do what we can to build society and recognise our own limitations has the ring of truth for those of all faiths and none.

Thanks for all that you do to make Westcott the high trust community that it is – keep putting those bricks down.

Every blessing,
Tim



FEBRUARY 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 and follow the link.

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

| DATE | THEME | 8:30AM | 10:15AM |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2nd Feb | Candlemass | Book of Common Prayer Communion | Communion |
| 9th Feb | Jesus Calls | Book of Common Prayer Communion | Morning Worship |
| 16th Feb | Blessings and Woes | Book of Common Prayer Communion | Communion |
| 23rd Feb | Calming Storms | 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 for more information.

MIDWEEK PRAYER & WORSHIP

Wednesdays

10am

Communion at St John's

BUILDING
FRIENDSHIPS



SHARING
LIFE

Join a Life Group

Small groups of people who meet online or in person every 2 weeks to chat and pray about life & faith.

Life groups:

- explore ways we can bring God's love, justice and joy into our relationships with other people and creation, into our leisure and into our work
- give you an opportunity to explore the Bible and consider what it says
- use worship, simple contemplation and prayer to help us encounter God

Contact Tim Armstrong at vicar@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk for more information

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Westcott's baby & toddler group

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fun

parents
grandparents
guardians...
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St John's Hall, Westcott
9-11am every Thursday during term time
£2 voluntary donation

A row of colorful illustrations at the bottom showing children engaged in various activities: two children playing with blocks, a child with a toy car, a child with a toy train, and a child with a toy car.

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@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk
or visit thechurchinwestcott.org.uk



FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Death:

17th November 2024

Florence June Reid (95)



FLOODLIGHTING

Many thanks to Westcott Village Association for sponsoring the church floodlighting for February.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting, please contact Sarah Massey at admin@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk. (Suggested donation of £75 to Westcott Church Funds.)

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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reception Bees Class Forest School

The children in Bees Class have been working hard at Forest School, making decorations and some creative mud dinners, and puddings! They have persevered with their fire steels, trying to make 'dragon sneezes' to light the fire. We even managed to catch the sparking moment on camera! The reward was a delicious Smore, the children toasted their marshmallows and were very sensible about the fire circle rules.

looking at the work of Clarice Cliff and making our own interpretation of her plate *The Tree*.

"I liked mixing the colours" Edward

"It was fun when I blew the paint to make the tree" Florence



Year 3 Hedgehogs Class

Hedgehogs have been developing their sewing skills through our D&T textiles project where they designed and made their own cushions. They thought carefully about their design, made templates, practised a range of stitches and created a fantastic end result. They should be very proud of all of their creativity, hard work and

Year 1 & 2 Butterflies Class

Butterflies have been learning about the primary and secondary colours in art this half term. We started by mixing primary colours to make secondary colours with different media - including paint, crayons, cellophane and pencils. We ended the topic by



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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS SCHOOL (cont.)

determination! Hedgehogs were glad to be able to use their cushions for their quiet reading time as a reward.

Year 4 Rabbits Class

This half term, Rabbits have made their very own chocolate sweets inspired by the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. We melted down chocolate bars to form our new sweets and then covered them with a variety of sprinkles. They tasted absolutely delicious!



Mrs Fyson
Headteacher



WESTCOTT BABY MEALS



More Westcott Babies!

The Westcott Baby Meals cooks are about to start catering for two more families with new babies in the village, but we really need more volunteers on the list!

Can you help?

As a Cook you sign up when it suits you, and then buy, cook and deliver a meal directly to the recipient family. There is no obligation or commitment and it's a wonderful community initiative to be part of.

Can we help you?

If you live in Westcott and you're expecting 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:

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Calling All Artists!



Arts Week at St James' Church, Shere. June 9-15th

Following the success of the 2023 Arts Week at St James' Church, Shere, a similar celebration is planned for this summer. A wonderful programme of events has been finalised including live music, film, poetry, words and a glorious art exhibition that runs all week and celebrates the work of local artists. This year's sub theme is "Light" and everyone is invited to celebrate the interaction of words, art, music and faith.

All events are held in St James' Church and are free to attend, with donations very welcome. The Arts Week Coffee Club will be open every day and all are warmly welcome to attend any or all of the activities! Do mark the dates in your diary: June 9th - June 15th. The programme details will be available from March.

Any enquiries: artsweek@parishofshere.com

*Arts Week Art Exhibition - a call for artworks in 2D & 3D!
A highlight of the Arts Week is the art exhibition which showcases the work of local artists, amateur and professional. All artists are welcome to submit their work in 2D or 3D, loosely based on the theme of Light.*



There is no fee or commission taken, although a donation to the church is most welcome if an artwork is sold. A big shout out to our artists! Come and help us celebrate art in all its forms and share the joy of creativity with our community. Please email artsweek@parishofshere.com to express your interest or for any enquiries.



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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:

- **Jane Morris – more than a face:** John Hawks WIM looks at the life and contribution of Jane, the wife of the multi-talented William Morris, who was an icon of the Pre-Raphaelite movement and the subject of many portraits by her lover Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Live talk, Monday 3rd February, at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.
- **The Mayflower Connection:** Zoom talk by Helen Baggott, focusing on some postcards sent in the UK and in America in the early 1900s that help share the story of The Mayflower and connect to other events of international importance. Monday 17th February, 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 11th February 10.30am

Jorge Lewinski – Portraits of the British Art Scene Pamela Campbell-Johnston



So who was photographing artists in Britain in the swinging sixties and seventies? Mario Testino and David Bailey may be household names, but it was Polish-born Jorge Lewinski who was considered the foremost photographer of artists in Britain in this period. Lecturer Pamela Campbell-Johnston explains why he was so important.

The lecture will be held at 10.30 in Martineau Hall, Dorking Halls. Coffee available from 9:30am. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £7.50 but contact Linda Packham on 07960 995707 (email - ljpackman@gmail.com) to book.

For more information and details of the forthcoming programme, visit www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk

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Sports Club Trustees Need You

Westcott Sports Club, home to our village football and cricket teams, and a whole lot more fun besides, is looking for new trustees to join the existing dynamic team. There are only four meetings a year and each trustee has clear roles and responsibilities. If you are interested please email for an application form to wsctrustees1@gmail.com

JustGiving Appeal

The clubrooms, surrounds and grounds at Stable Meadow, Milton Street are in need of some TLC. At some stage most people in the Westcott Community will have used the facilities for cricket, football, a birthday party or for a community-based event hosted by Westcott Sports Club.

We really need your help to repair and renew the facilities. So please can we ask for a donation of any size. To find the JustGiving page search *Westcott Sports Club* and follow the link.

Thank you!



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WESTCOTT VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING



Wednesday 5th February

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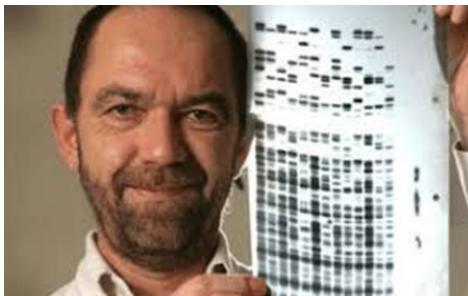


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WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP

The man who caught 1000 criminals. Talk by Dr Ian Goodall.

This is the story of how Alec Jeffreys, a young biologist who was born in January 1950, developed the technique of genetic finger printing to be able to identify the relationship of one person with another. Sir Alec Jeffreys graduated from Merton College, Oxford in 1971 with a 1st class degree in Biochemistry. After Oxford he moved to Amsterdam University and then in 1977 to Leicester where in 1984 he devised a way of showing variations in DNA. He developed a process of isolating mitochondria DNA which is passed from mother to child. The technique was called 'genetic fingerprinting'.



The method was first put to use in 1985 to confirm the identity of a boy from Ghana with his family in England. The technique was then used in a police forensic test to identify the murderer of two girls in November 1983 and July 1986. The prime subject was Richard

Buckland who was in the vicinity in both cases but denied being responsible. The police took samples of all the men in the area (some 5000) but without success when these were tested to find a match with samples taken from the two girls.

The breakthrough came when somebody in a pub overheard a man boasting that he had evaded the test by sending a friend to give a sample. This was reported to the police who then took a sample from him. As a result Colin Pitchfork was the first person convicted on the basis of DNA fingerprinting and was arrested for the murders of Lynda Mann and Dawn Ashworth on 19th September 1987. This exonerated Richard Buckland, who had been the prime suspect. The story behind this investigation is told in the Joseph Wamborough 1989 book – *The Blooding – the true story of the Narborough village murders*.

Sir Alec Jeffreys became known worldwide for developing techniques for genetic finger printing and DNA profiling in forensic science to assist police detective work and resolve paternity and immigration disputes. In 1992 these methods were used to identify and confirm the identity of Josef Mengele who died in 1979 by comparison with DNA from his mother and son. He was the German doctor who carried out experiments on human beings in Auschwitz during

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to see -

thank you to all your wonderful team”

**Annie - Daughter of
Nower House resident**



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WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP (cont.)

WWII and later escaped to South America.

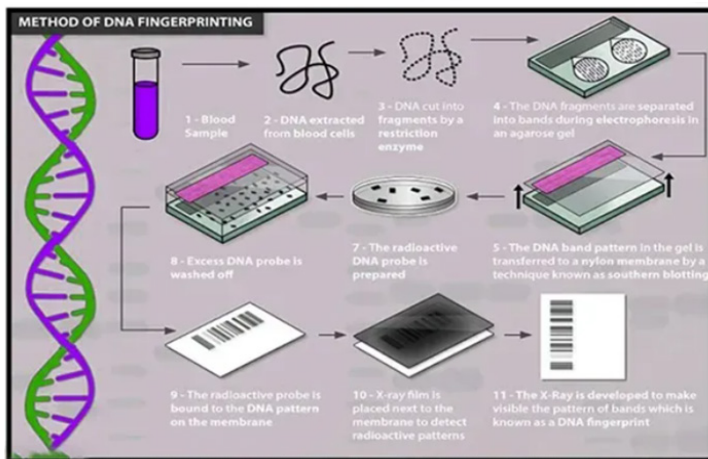
In July 2018 the Russians used DNA analysis to find out if the remains of Tsar Nicholas II and his wife and family of 4 girls and a son were authentic. The family were shot dead by Bolsheviks on the night of 16th July 1918 and buried in a mass grave near Ekaterinburg. This brought to an end three centuries of the Romanov dynasty. On 19th July 1993 the Romanov family were disinterred from the mass grave and the bodies were identified using DNA analysis. Comparison between the mitochondria DNA of the grand nephew Alexandra and our own Prince Philip was positive. Prince Philip was related to the Romanov family by his maternal grandmother Princess Victoria of Hesse and the Rhine,

who was the sister of Alexandra Feodorovna, the last Tsarina of Russia, who was married to Tsar Nicholas II of the Romanov dynasty. This made Prince Philip, whose parents were Greek and Danish, a distant relative of the Romanovs.

The next WLHG Talk will be on 11th March 2025 with speaker Anne Sassin from the Surrey Archaeological Society about Test Pitting at Albury Park to investigate deserted medieval settlements. As always the WLHG Committee encourages readers to propose talks and articles of interest. Contacts by email at westcottlocalhistory@gmail.com and for local information at our website – www.westcottlocalhistory.org

WLHG Scribe

Overview of the steps of DNA fingerprinting method



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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 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 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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MUSIC IN DORKING



2nd at 3.00, Brodsky quartet at Dorking Halls, £23, 01306 740619

4th at 1.00 & 7.00, screening of Les Miserables at Dorking Halls, £19.50, 01306 881717

15th Dorking Chamber Orchestra at St Nicolas' church Great Bookham

16th at 4.00, Brodsky quartet at Dorking Halls, £23, 01306 740619

19th at 7.30, Band of Royal Marines at Dorking Halls, £23.50, 01306 881717

27th at 7.15, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, £19.50, 01306 881717

The Dorking Concertgoers Society presents two concerts by the Brodsky string quartet this month, with a third one to follow in March. The Brodsky is one of the world's leading string quartets so we are privileged to have them play for us in Dorking. On 2nd they will play Bach, Schubert and Shostakovich, and on 16th Bach, Britten and Beethoven. Please note that both concerts are in the afternoon.

The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines will also be coming to Dorking. They promise an evening of music for everyone, including marches, solos, overtures and film music.

The Dorking Chamber Orchestra, playing in Great Bookham, have a concert including music by Bach, Handel, Haydn and Saint-George. They will be directed from the violin by Guy Button, who will also be the soloist in Bach's violin concerto in A minor. Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George, was a French violinist, conductor and composer whose music has been increasingly performed in recent years; the orchestra will play his first symphony.

Screenings at the Dorking Halls this month include Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* from the Royal Opera House and a staged concert version of *Les Miserables*, the brilliant musical based on the novel by Victor Hugo.



Ian Codd

THE STORY OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES



Three Years of Conflict: Ukrainians in the UK



The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 forced millions of Ukrainians to

seek safety abroad, including in the UK - just like my family and three others who found refuge in Westcott.

My name is Mariia, and I have been living in Westcott for almost three years. There are three other Ukrainian families here who, like me, arrived shortly after the war started. We consider ourselves lucky to be part of such a supportive community. The warmth and kindness we've received have made all the difference as we navigate these challenging times.



They say, "Time flies," and it really does! When we first arrived, we could never have imagined that the war would last over three years. The first few weeks, even the first few months, every Ukrainian was 100% sure that

a few more days and we would be going back, but it no longer seems that way.

As we mark the third anniversary of the invasion, it's important to recognise not only the



ongoing conflict but also the personal battles that Ukrainian refugees face each day. I believe the key word for all Ukrainians since their arrival has been "Adjust" - adjust to a new country, adjust to a new culture, adjust to new people, adjust to new jobs, and the list goes on. Numerous Ukrainian refugees in the UK are still struggling to find jobs that match their qualifications and experience. Having lived through this myself, I deeply relate to the hurdles they face.

Despite these challenges, Ukrainian refugees are incredibly resilient. They are eager to integrate, learn the language, and adapt to the UK job market. A great number are willing to start from scratch, taking lower-paying jobs with hopes of working their way up.

As an employment advisor, I've come across numerous stories of skilled professionals unable to work in their fields. Quite a few Ukrainian refugees,

THE STORY OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES (cont.)



despite their qualifications, find themselves working in low-skilled jobs. It's heart-wrenching to see talented people like biologists, accountants, entrepreneurs, and even doctors stuck in roles far below their abilities.

This situation leaves a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees in a state of limbo. They are building new lives in the UK but remain closely tied to the conflict back home. The lack of stability and uncertainty about their futures creates emotional and psychological stress, as they don't know what tomorrow holds.

Ukrainians try to support each other, and one example of this was a wonderful community event that I was privileged to host alongside the amazing Ukrainian Support Team

of Mole Valley District Council. It was a special gathering where the community came together to enjoy inspiring performances and connect with one another.

The UK government and the British public have provided significant support, from financial aid to housing, education, and employment resources. But integration requires more than just financial assistance; it requires time and continuous effort.

Meanwhile we truly hope that 2025 will bring the victory we so desperately wish for!

Mariia Makarova
Employment Advisor



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A is for amazing! Just ask our parents and their parents' parents.

B is for beautiful setting that we are lucky to be in.

I is for independence that we gain by learning through play.

N is for nurturing whereby we get the very best care.

G is for great big huge ginormous glorious garden. (with dinosaurs!)

E is for enormous amount of energy that our teachers have!

R is for rural and roaring (see dinosaurs in the garden).

C is for community. We have so much support from the lovely people in our village.

O is for outside – lots and lots of fresh air, and then some more!

M is for mushy and slushy and all the messy play we can muster!

M is for marvellous cooking creations from field to fork! (It's a good day for parents)

O is for outside again of course!

N is for nature that is all around us that we fully embrace!

N is for nattering, we make friends and we chitter chatter away.

U is for uniquely us. Each one of us is the only one of us in the world!

R is for racing around in the garden. We surely will be tired by bedtime? Surely?

S is for safe and secure – a feeling that we have with our friends and teachers.

E is for exploring every new thing that we come across - life is exciting at 2/3/4!!!

R is for rouge, jaune, vert, bleu – oui! We always look forward to our French!

Y is for yippee!!!! The ONLY feeling we have on a Monday morning!

That is us in a (sort of!) nutshell! If you would like to join our nursery family please don't hesitate to get in touch. Call 07842 978823 or email abingercommonnursery@gmail.com We can't wait to show you around!

P.S the picture is of our wonderful Mary and Joseph. We had to share it even though it's February!



Kate Fairbrass



Jon and Mum Groceries: A Thriving Not-For-Profit Community Hub

Established in 2019 at the start of the COVID pandemic, Jon and Mum Groceries began as a simple veg box delivery service for locals in need. Since then, it has blossomed into a beloved refill store and cafe, playing a vital role in fostering connections within the community.

What Jon and Mum Groceries Offers:

- Refill Store:** Reduce waste and shop sustainably for your groceries.
- Cafe:** Enjoy a relaxing atmosphere and delicious food and drinks.
- Local Crafts:** Support local artisans by purchasing their unique creations.
- Community Garden:** Spend time in nature and learn about gardening. Help out on Saturday lunchtimes and enjoy a cup of tea and cake.
- Friday BBQs:** Join the fun from 5-7pm.
- Friday Lunch:** Grab a locally-made hot sausage roll or bacon sandwich.
- Saturday/Sunday Breakfasts:** Indulge in a full English breakfast or a pastry in the garden.

| Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Shop/Cafe Closed | Open 12-4pm | Open 10-4pm | Open 10-7pm | Open 10-2pm | Open 10-2pm |
| Community Fridge 2.15pm | | | Curry Night 5-7pm | Community Garden 11-2pm | |
| | | Fresh Bread & Cakes | Sourdough & Sausage Rolls | | |
| | | Light Meals | Lunches | Breakfasts | Light Meals |
| | | Secretts Farm Delivery | Fresh Market Delivery | | |



Jon and Mum Groceries is more than just a store - it's a place to connect, support local businesses, and make a positive impact on the environment. Come visit us and experience the warm and welcoming atmosphere!

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Many come early to queue and chat –
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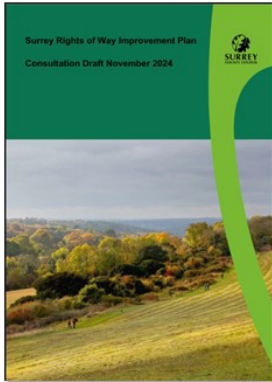
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Surrey County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan Final Consultation – closes 9th February 2025



Following extensive public surveys and consultations last year Surrey County Council have published a draft Rights of Way Improvement

Plan for the period 2025 to 2035 and are now asking for feedback before it is finalised. The WVA submitted a response to their initial consultation in March 2024 which can be read on our website <https://westcottvillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SCC-ROWIP-consultation-WVA-response-310324-Final.pdf> and we will submit a further response to this final public consultation before the 9th February deadline.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out how SCC intends to improve the existing network of footpaths, bridleways and Byways in Surrey and is based around four themes;

- Public Rights of Way are for Everyone
- Maintaining and Protecting the Network
- Future Surrey

- Communications and Partnerships
- There are objectives and actions set out under each theme and while none are specific to a particular location nearly all have relevance to Westcott and we believe are very positive. This final consultation survey asks how strongly you agree with the objectives set out under each of the four themes and there is a box at the end for other comments.

The draft Plan is an easy but lengthy read and the final survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. The survey is at <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/rowip-24/> and is open for public consultation until the 9th February 2025. Please participate if you can as we believe enthusiastic support to the consultation in sufficient numbers from our community will help convince Surrey County Council to prioritise investment.

Milton Court Planning Application – MVDC Development Committee

The WVA were given a three-minute slot to speak at the MVDC Development Committee considering the planning application to develop 86 homes at Milton Court on the 8th January. At the time of writing this article the outcome of the meeting is not known but the key points



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The Westcott Village Hall, previously the Reading Room, is in the heart of the village of Westcott, in the Surrey Hills. It is a flexible space with diverse amenities available for hosting classes, parties, meetings and functions.

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These depend on when you hire, and discounts are given to regular users. Rates start at £8 per hour (minimum 4 hours' booking), please contact our Booking Secretary Deborah on info@westcottvillagehall.com to discuss.

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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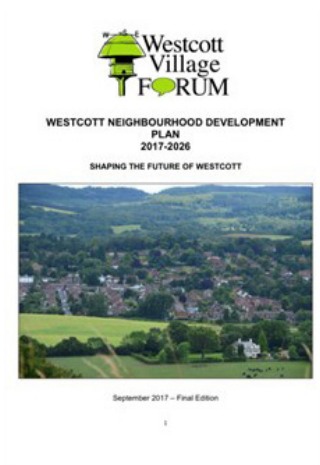
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James Leaver delivered included our objection to the planning application due to a very real concern about the congestion this development and the 144 homes at Sondes Place Farm will place on the A25 into Dorking at peak times. There is currently only a weak commitment required of the developer to contribute to a feasibility study to improve traffic management.

He also included our disappointment that the cycling and walking infrastructure improvements only focus on the east of the development towards Dorking, with no consideration to improvements to the west which would benefit the many pupils from Dorking who attend our village school.

Westcott Development Plan

Neighbourhood



The work to update the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) is underway with the three working groups, Data Collection (led by Dr Chris Smewing), Policy (led by Ian Dunsford) and Communications (led by Jo Astor) getting off the ground. The whole process is expected to take 12 to 18 months and will involve discussion and debate at the Westcott Village Forum meetings, as well as being widely consulted on throughout the village with household surveys, formal studies and information gathering.

A presentation is being held for local parents at Surrey Hills All Saints School to explain the WNDP and the process we will go through to review it. This presentation is before the Celebration Assembly on Friday 7th February.

There is now a dedicated page on the Westcott Village website for the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan which you can access at <https://westcottvillage.com/westcott-neighbourhood-development-plan/> You can read all presentation materials, updates from the working groups as they arise and a copy of the existing (and still current) WNDP.

Please note the next meeting of the Westcott Village Forum is on Thursday 27th February 7.30pm at Holy Trinity.

Do you have 1-2 hours free a week? Would you like to make a difference to someone's life?

Yes? Then Age Concern Mole Valley has the perfect opportunity for you. We are looking for volunteers to join our Befriending Service across Mole Valley. We have a waiting list of older, lonely and isolated people who need a Volunteer Befriender. Can you help?

For more details, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Diana Webb on: 07821 649683 / 01306 899104 or email: diana@ageconcernmolevalley.org.uk



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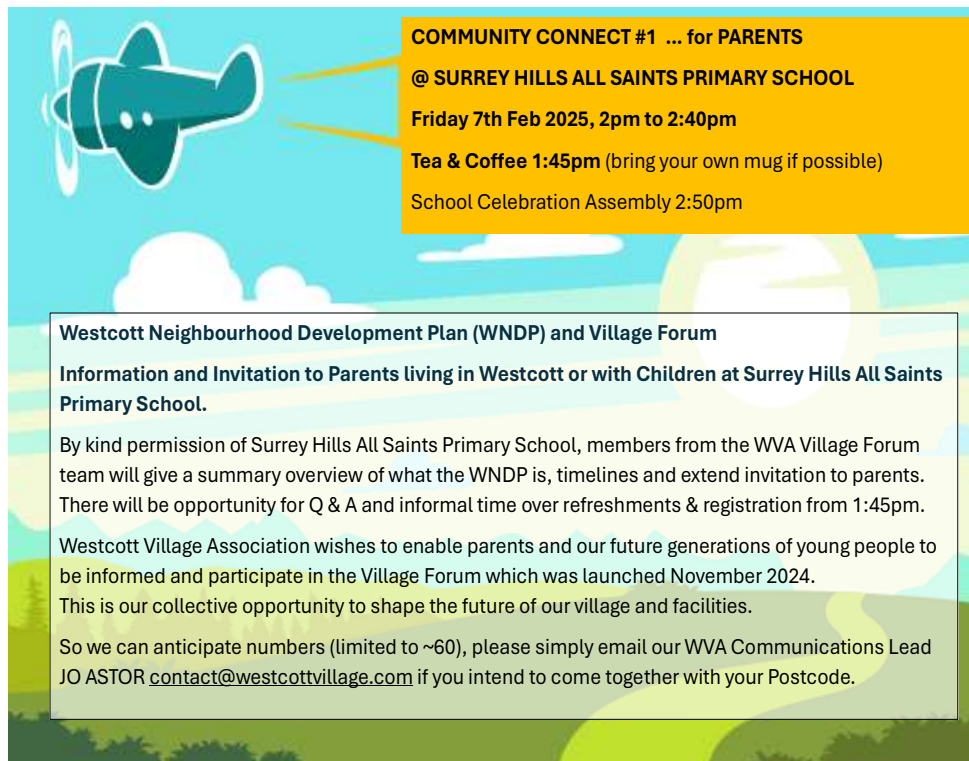
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Over 100 of you have already signed up to be part of the Village Forum so please put this date in your diary and come along. It's never too late to get involved so if you think you might like to join in the discussion, please email contact@westcottvillage.com to express an interest and come along on the 27th February.

As always please do get in touch with any issues or to share your views on

village life. We have current openings on the Committee so if you would like to come and join us or just come along to a few meetings to see if it is for you please do get in touch.

WVA Committee
Jo Astor, Paul Goddard, James Leaver, Nick Lund, Magesh Ramakrishnan contact@westcottvillage.com



COMMUNITY CONNECT #1 ... for PARENTS
@ SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS PRIMARY SCHOOL
Friday 7th Feb 2025, 2pm to 2:40pm
Tea & Coffee 1:45pm (bring your own mug if possible)
School Celebration Assembly 2:50pm

Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (W NDP) and Village Forum
Information and Invitation to Parents living in Westcott or with Children at Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School.

By kind permission of Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School, members from the WVA Village Forum team will give a summary overview of what the W NDP is, timelines and extend invitation to parents. There will be opportunity for Q & A and informal time over refreshments & registration from 1:45pm.

Westcott Village Association wishes to enable parents and our future generations of young people to be informed and participate in the Village Forum which was launched November 2024. This is our collective opportunity to shape the future of our village and facilities.

So we can anticipate numbers (limited to ~60), please simply email our WVA Communications Lead JO ASTOR contact@westcottvillage.com if you intend to come together with your Postcode.



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DORKING MUSEUM

Dorking Museum tells the story of Dorking and the surrounding villages from the age of the dinosaurs through to the modern day. Visitors can follow that story through fossils and archaeological discoveries, the adventure of the Mayflower and the Dorking pilgrims, the smells of a medieval marketplace, the grandeur of the great estates, two world wars, sporting achievement, the women's suffrage movement, the music of Vaughan Williams and 10cc, the elegance of Wedgwood china, the discovery of synthetic penicillin and so much more. There is so much to discover, and displays are regularly refreshed and new exhibits added.

Temporary exhibitions follow other local themes, the latest of which is **Building between the vines – the story of the Denbies LEGO house:**



Amazing as it may seem, a full-size house was built of LEGO on the Denbies Wine Estate in 2009 as part of a BBC television series entitled *James May Toy Stories*, in which the

presenter took some of the country's best-loved children's toys and built large scale models from them. The total project took a few late summer weeks, but, following completion, a housewarming party, a toast with Denbies wine, and an overnight stay in the house by May on a rainy September night, the house itself remained in situ for only four days.



The two-storey house took almost 2,000 volunteers five weeks to build using over 3.3 million bricks and setting a world record for the largest LEGO house. It included furniture, furnishings, kitchen appliances, even a shower, sink and flushing loo on the top floor. Even a LEGO cat was created. Due to its sheer size and weight, relocation to a permanent site was impractical, so the house at Denbies was demolished, with the bricks collected up and donated to charity.

The exhibition tells how and why it was built. A collection of specially designed Lego models of buildings and objects with a Dorking

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- ❖ Denbies Wine Estate
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DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)

connection are on display, and there are other activities for children. A LEGO Dorking Cockerel trail around the Museum, with prizes, will continue for the duration of the exhibition.



Dorking in LEGO family activity:

Taking a lead from the current temporary exhibition, our February activity takes place at the Museum on Saturday 22nd February, 10am to 1pm. Families are invited to create LEGO models of Dorking features and buildings. The children's models will be added to the display in the Museum's front window for all visitors and passers-by to see until the exhibition ends. With thanks to Dorking Beatitudes for the kind loan of the LEGO bricks. Children must be accompanied.

Family Activities at Dorking Library: Our monthly family activity in conjunction with Dorking Library, St. Martin's Walk, takes place on Saturday 8th February,

10am to 1pm. For National Story-telling week, families are invited to come and use miniature objects to tell a story. This free event is aimed at 4–11-year-olds and children must be accompanied.

Get involved: The Museum is run entirely by volunteers and receives no public funding – our friendly team was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021. To continue the good work, we are looking for new volunteers who can spare a few hours a month at the front desk or bring skills to a variety of other roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. There are current vacancies for a volunteer recruitment coordinator, a digital communications coordinator, assistants for family activities, school and youth visits, a shop manager, a qualified archivist with curatorial experience and a general handyman. See 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. 01306 876591. Visit dorkingmuseum.org.uk/digital-guide/.

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*February is the only month
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a full moon, though it
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this happened was 1999. The
next time there won't
be a full moon in February
is 2037.*

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Invasion repelled at Claremont Gardens

One Sunday afternoon this winter when the rain stopped, I headed for Claremont Gardens in Esher for a breath of fresh air. Heading up the path above the amphitheatre, raucous chattering high in the trees caught my attention. With careful study, I identified the cause of the disturbance. It came from a group of trees bare of leaves but copiously provided with swags of mistletoe laden with berries.



Mistle Thrush

The noise came from a Mistle Thrush who clearly considered those berries its personal larder for the winter and from a raiding party of Fieldfares who had spotted the bounty. The Mistle Thrush moved vigorously about the trees, chattering angrily and making much aggressive display of its white underwings. After more than ten minutes, the Fieldfares reluctantly flew off. The Mistle Thrush then perched on the topmost spot and carolled its

victory.

The Mistle Thrush is resident, breeding and raising its young here. It was named for its fondness for the berries of the mistletoe, the hemiparasitic plant that attaches to its host tree from which to extract water and nutrients. Mistle Thrushes nevertheless enjoy a wide range of berries in autumn and winter; those in my garden defend the female holly bushes from other berry lovers.

Fieldfares breed mainly in Scandinavia, migrating south and west to find food and less cold winters. The party at Claremont were indeed foreign invaders seeking food growing here. They usually switch back to feeding on invertebrates earlier than our native thrushes, perhaps because the berry stocks are well defended by the locals?



Fieldfare

Images courtesy of RSPB

Facebook: RSPB Dorking and District

Instagram: @rsppb_dorking

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



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DESERT ISLAND DISCS



Jon Mears

How did a likely lad from up North wind up being director of the Westcott Village Hub Community Interest Company aka Jon and Mum's? This journey is as winding as Jon's tastes in music are telling. His younger muses were rather melancholic, Chris de Burgh (Lady in Red), Simon and Garfunkel (Bridge Over Troubled Waters) and Dire Straits (Brothers in Arms).

He struck out on his own at fifteen after the tragic loss of his brother and through his Northern grit and determination eventually got to University studying environmental management and technology. By now his mood music had changed to heavy rock, going to live concerts to hear Rage Against the Machine whose songs included Killing in the Name, inspired by the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles. This was an angrier Jon, by his own admission working hard and playing hard, not really dealing with his emotions. This was to be the pattern of his life for the next thirty years.

Then on 30th January 2020, The World Health Organisation declared the Covid outbreak as a pandemic. The country locked down and as life dramatically changed for all of us, Jon took decisive steps to radically alter his lifestyle. He wanted a healthier way to live, physically and psychologically.

The timing of the pandemic presented the opportunity. By then he was selling street food and responded to an email from the Church and became a volunteer feeding local people who needed help. Having recently moved into the area, this was also a way to get to know people. He and his Mum started with veg boxes, and brownies. That desire to create a healthier place for himself coalesced into building a healthier space for others. Just wanting to help grew into wanting to bring people together in a place where there was no obligation to buy anything, where people didn't feel rushed, to have a safe place.

There was no master plan, the original small strip, expanded into the present building and grew organically, multiplying from groceries to sustainable products and the café. In 2023 Jon and Mum was registered as the Westcott Village Hub Community Interest Company. He emphasized the enterprise was not for profit and he didn't want to compete with the village stores. His ethos is to stimulate other community initiatives and to be a conduit where people can be signposted to get the help they need. It's remarkable, he says that the coincidence of someone being in Jon and Mum's having a query and someone present being just the right person to assist. You ask does anyone know a reliable electrician and there's

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DESERT ISLAND DISCS (cont.)



one having a coffee.

Jon surprised himself when he and a friend started exchanging musical choices during the pandemic. They gave themselves a theme and one was to find songs from the ten most populous countries. He discovered different styles which he had no idea existed and which opened him up more diverse genres.

He is living a different version of himself and whilst not espousing a conventional religious belief, has a spiritual dimension to his life. He is kinder, more patient and tries to be tolerant and without judgment. The music he listens to is more soulful, reflecting his sense of gratitude that he really is doing the best he can. His choice of Matt Emery is an interesting one. Matt is a local Surrey-based and self-taught musician, who like another favourite Ludovico (Einaudi) has created classical soundscapes. Matt's *Empire* and Ludovico's *Summer Portraits* are hauntingly beautiful.

But the record that Jon would save from the waves is Manchester Orchestra's *I know how to speak*. The lyrics are as important to him as the music:

*I know how to speak
And I know where I'm going
I wanted to seek
But I got distracted*

*The past, about pain
It's timeless and honest
So let go of your shame
It's a dead, dampening blanket*

*It's a facade
Go back and look at your training
There's nobody else like you
I think I finally explained it
So I continue to move*

He can't help everyone and doesn't have all the answers, relying on the wisdom of others, but he is pouring everything he has learnt into the hub. He and his Mum have created a place of warmth and welcome where people can just sit, meet, talk, buy things if they want to and ask for comfort if they need it and feel safe. He is philosophical about its future and does have moments when he thinks it all might be taken away or he has missed someone who needs help.

Music has been hugely influential and paralleled key points in his life. The early melancholy morphed into the heavy metal when he was detached from his emotions and living a less stable life. Auto-slave's *Show me how to live* was a transitional piece leading into the calm of classical soundscapes and he is now at peace with himself.

Jennifer Brown

CALLING ALL THOSE WHO GENERALLY EAT ALONE

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GREEN WESTCOTT

Beneath our feet



'Grounding', the practice of connecting to the Earth, provides many positive effects on the human body, through contact with the natural electrical direct current (DC) flowing across the Earth's crust. Medical studies are revealing that through grounding - practices such as lying or walking barefoot on the grass - the human body enters a profound healing state which, among other benefits, can help reduce pain, stress, and inflammation and improve mental well-being.

This is but one of the life-giving properties that derive from the ground beneath our feet. Indeed, all life above ground is, in one way or another, dependent upon the precious thin top layer that blankets the Earth - soil. Soil is the basis of almost 99% of our food and so the quality of the food we eat is intimately linked with the quality of the soil. Soil also plays a significant role in climate regulation as it acts as a filter for water and can help in flood management by slowing and holding onto rainfall. It can also store a huge amount of carbon – more than all the world's trees.

The Sustainable Food Trust describes soil as a collective stomach of all the plants on the planet. Soils are living ecosystems containing a multitude of plant roots,

microorganisms, creatures and fungal networks. Much like we depend upon gut bacteria to help digest our food, so soil organisms play a central role in breaking down organic matter into absorbable nutrients, which plants can then take up through the large surface area of their root systems. So it follows that how we treat the soil matters - not just for our health but for the health of all organisms, plants, animals and ecosystems which are affected, directly or indirectly, by the quality of the soil.



Sadly, most of the UK's soils are currently classed as 'degraded' or 'very degraded', with population pressures and practices associated with intensive agriculture causing increased damage to the soil: Tilling disrupts soil structure, accelerating surface run-off and soil erosion; pesticides damage microbial soil life, disrupting soil ecosystem functions; monocrops reduce soil biodiversity; and overgrazing strips the ground of plant cover leaving it

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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

exposed to erosion and compaction by wind and rain.



Restoring healthy soil is a key element in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises and improving public health. Fortunately, there are many ways in which we can work with natural processes to help restore and improve our soils. Just like humans, the soil needs a balanced diet and a nurturing environment. By feeding the soil, with the addition of natural mulches in the form of compost or wood chips, we can also help to protect the soil and improve its structure thus increasing its capacity for storage of water, air and carbon. Nurturing the soil may simply mean using fewer chemicals and practicing no-dig gardening to allow the soil to return to its natural cycles. Cover cropping reduces soil erosion by ensuring there are no areas of exposed soil and helps capture nutrients, while practicing crop rotation improves soil health, optimizes nutrients and reduces pests and diseases.

These simple acts of reciprocity, in feeding and nurturing the soil that feeds us, helps to put us back into right relationship with the land we live

in, so enhancing our wellbeing, while allowing the Earth to restore vital natural processes for diverse life to thrive.

(Fully referenced article at www.greenwestcott.org/blog)

Ways to Feed & Nurture Your Soil

These are some of the practices we use at Westcott Community Garden: We are pesticide free, using the no-dig technique – it makes life easier and allows soil life to flourish! See Charles Dowding's website for more information.

Creating our own compost from a mixture of green, (kitchen peelings, garden clippings, manure), and brown material, (small twigs, shredded cardboard, dried leaves,) and using to top up flower and vegetable beds.

Mulching plants and trees with wood chippings to save on water use and improve soil structure over time.

Practicing crop rotation to mimic diversity and help balance nutrients and reduce pests and diseases.

We also need to:

Use cover crops to act as a protective shield for the soil in between food crops, protecting it from heavy rain and smothering weeds.

Jakki Phillips



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Forthcoming Events at St John's Chapel

Tuesday 11th February (Midday) - Lunch in the Chapel. Join us for a £5 lunch to raise money for Mid Surrey Community Fridge and to enjoy other villagers' company. If you know anyone who would appreciate it or want to come along then please let us know.

Saturday 15th February (11-4pm) - Local Craft Stalls and Car Boot Clothing. Meet your local crafts people and browse the charity clothing sale.

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday (Midday-2pm) - Pop along with your half done crochet, or the poem you haven't finished or anything else you are working on and have some cake & company. £5 includes hot drink and a cake or pastry.

Spring Fling Serenade Friday 21st February (8-10pm) - Our, now famous, open mic night! £2 entry (free for performers).

Brockham Choral



Brockham Choral rehearse every Tuesday from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm at St John's C of E Primary School Dorking, RH4 2LR.

Cole Bendall will guide and prepare the choir to sing Joseph Haydn's 'The Creation' at St.Martin's Church, Dorking. The Concert Date for your diary is 5th April at 7.30pm.

If you would like to sing with us, no audition required. For further information visit www.brockhamchoral.org

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
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