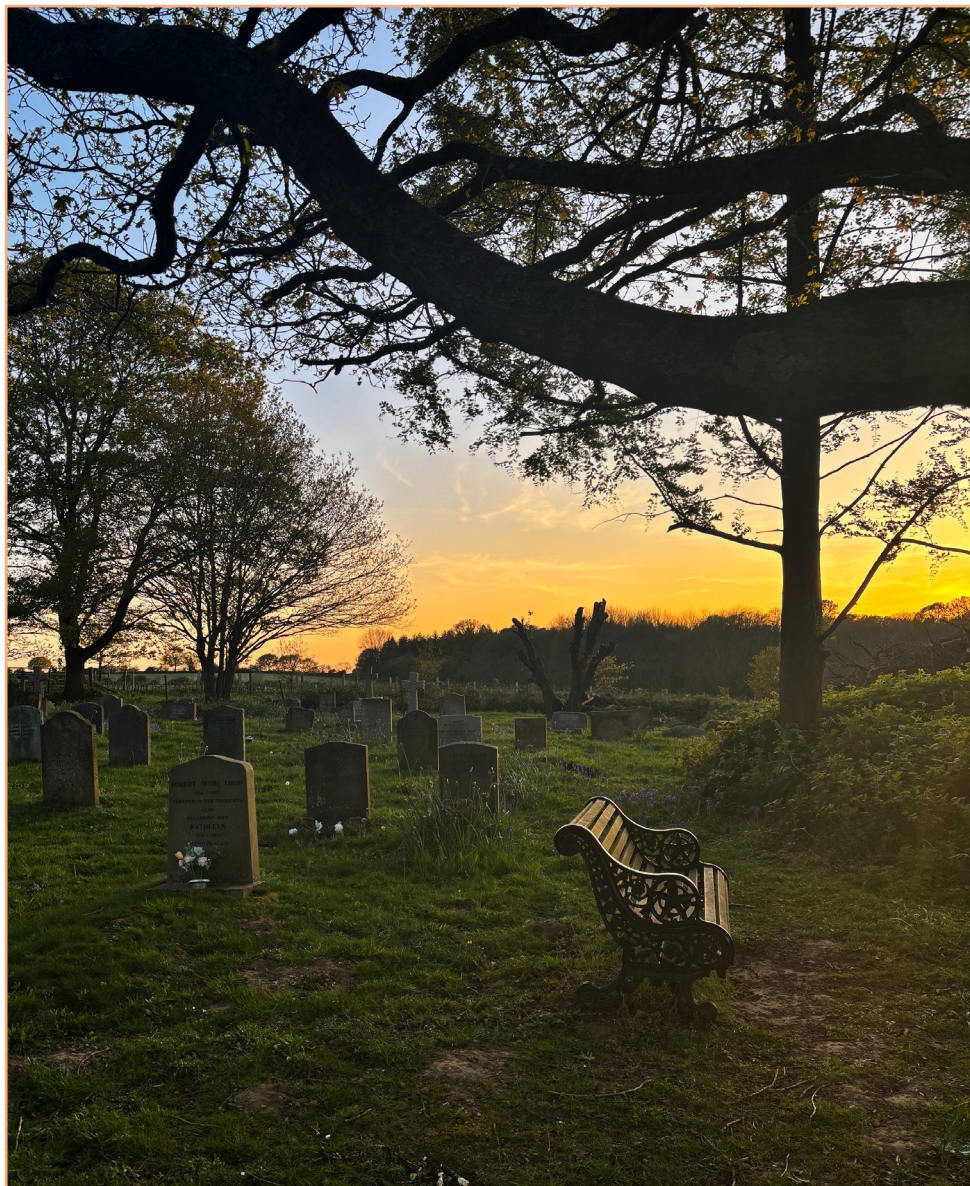


Westcott Village

Magazine July/August 2026



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'Cat in the Churchyard' by Maria Peskett

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

September issue:

8th August 2026

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



Well, we made it! I know June is meant to be summer but it hasn't felt like it so far, so I am making an executive decision and declaring July as the start of summer proper.

Sadly we have the obituaries of three well-known members of the village community this month, Roger Christian, Terry Wooden and Janet Philpin, all of whom contributed enormously to life in Westcott over many years. They will all be sorely missed.

Don't miss the Gardeners' Club Summer Show on July 4th, there are

lots of classes to enter, whether you grow, bake or craft. The village coffee morning keeps going through the summer, on 1st July and 5th August.

I have had lots of photos sent in over the last couple of months that there hasn't been space to show off properly so I have put them all in together in this issue, have a look on pages 31-35 if you've sent anything in lately. The cover photo has a cat hidden somewhere - as ever no prizes bar the satisfaction of spotting it - I'll let you know where it was in September so you've plenty of time to look!

Have a great summer,

Cath

editor@westcottmag.com

Balchins Lane Off Street Party



In the absence of any royal jubilee or another excuse for a party, the Balchins Lane Gang decided to get together anyway for an off-street Street Party on Sunday 14th June. Around 45 residents gathered to share food and meet each other - several for the first time. It was a convivial afternoon in the June sunshine!

Anna Kemkers



...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



THE CHURCH OF SAINT WHO?

Have you ever stopped and contemplated how strange it is that some of the grandest, most beautiful and impressive buildings in our midst are named - not after our great kings, public figures or military heroes – but a ragtag collection of working-class men and women from the ancient Middle East.

Admittedly, being Westcott, our church building is named after the full Holy Trinity – we are nothing if not thorough here – but we are surrounded by churches in the nearby towns and villages which are named after, respectively: John (fisherman), James (also a fisherman), Paul (made tents for a living), Mary (mum of around 7 children), Barnabus (owned some fields) and Martin (soldier who gave his cloak away to a beggar).

Does this not strike you as somewhat odd? Most people who are remembered from history are the great and the good – rulers, heroes, philosophers, authors and the like. Not people who came from ordinary backgrounds.

One of the extraordinary things about Christianity – whether you believe its central claims or not – is that 2000 years later there is an abundance of these buildings named after such people. There are sociological explanations for such things which get you part way to unpicking the strangeness of this phenomenon, but I find them unsatisfactory without the additional footnote that something of significance took place 2000 years ago for these ordinary people to leave a legacy of such proportions on our planet.

These were not the people you would single out to launch and sustain a new religious movement – and yet the world is fundamentally different because of the message they carried.

“IT IS A PLACE I OFTEN GET A
SENSE OF THE PRESENCE OF
GOD AND FEEL AN UNUSUAL
PEACE – AND I PRAY YOU
MAY AS WELL.”



...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



I find it hard to explain away their impact apart from taking seriously their claim that the Jesus they followed really was raised from the dead, and that a power beyond our human understanding equipped them to share this message far and wide. If what they claimed to have witnessed did happen then it changes everything.

I hope you enjoy the summer months whether you are travelling or staying local. If you stumble across an open church building, why not pop in and explore. Bonus points for anyone who visits a place named after a particularly obscure local saint!

Before I go, can I take the opportunity to thank everyone who helps keep Holy Trinity Westcott open for people to explore and pray in during the week. There are an amazing team of people who keep the church unlocked, clean, filled with flowers, and as a space for you to use. If you want space to sit and reflect over the summer then please do make use of it. It is a place I often get a sense of the presence of God and feel an unusual peace – and I pray you may as well.

Every blessing,
Rev Tim.

JULY & AUGUST 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
5th July	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
12th July	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	20-20-20 with Breakfast
19th July	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Morning Worship with Baptism and Sunday Club
26th July	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
2nd Aug	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Morning Prayer
9th Aug	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	20-20-20
16th Aug	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Morning Prayer
23rd Aug	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion
30th Aug	Acts & History	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion

MIDWEEK PRAYER & WORSHIP

Wednesdays

10am

Communion at St John's

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

Holy Trinity Pastoral Assistants: Mark Shakespeare (01306 888010)

For help, or more information, please contact

Tim Armstrong, Vicar: vicar@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk
or visit thechurchinwestcott.org.uk

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Baptism:

24th May Jasper Lloyd Xavier Montgomery

Death:

24th December 2024 John Crook (61)



FLOODLIGHTING

The July floodlighting has been sponsored by Margaret, Catriona, Kirsty and Robert to mark the anniversary of Murray's death.

There's been no sponsorship of the church floodlighting for August.

If you'd like to sponsor the floodlighting for August, or any other month, please contact Sarah Massey at admin@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk. (Suggested donation of £75 to Westcott Church Funds.)

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The children at Surrey Hills have had an exciting few weeks! The school council ran a talent showcase for the children; over half the children took part in various roles from performing, to backstage support to compering the event! We were treated to an afternoon of gymnastics, dancing, singing, comedy and Ukrainian!

The staff were incredibly proud of the children for the confidence showed when performing and the values exuded by the children in audience to support their peers. It was a wonderful afternoon!



The Teddy Bears' picnic was a great success. A huge thank you to the amazing team of parent volunteers who facilitated this brilliant event, raising vital funds to support the school whilst creating a wonderful experience for the families too.

The enriching experiences at school have continued in the last month with a visit from the police service for our children in Bees and Otters as part of their outreach service to support our PSHE curriculum.

We celebrated David Attenborough's birthday and thought about how he embodies our school values, and children in Otters & Hedgehogs benefitted from golf tuition from a





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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS SCHOOL (cont.)



PGA professional and infants have enjoyed their forest school sessions where they have planted sunflowers and potatoes. Please do follow our social media profile on either Instagram or Facebook to find out more about what happens at the school.

The children in Y6 took part in their statutory assessments and we were proud of the way in which they applied themselves. They are now eagerly anticipating a range of events to celebrate the end of their

primary experience, ahead of their transition to secondary school in September.

We are looking forward to hosting afternoon tea for our team of volunteers in the locality who support the school in a range of ways. We are incredibly grateful for your time, energy and expertise!

Kelly Frost
Headteacher



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. The upcoming date before a short summer break is:

- **Restoring the Art Deco Richmond Station:** Live talk by Benny O'Looney, a practicing architect and a teacher at the prestigious Architectural Association, who led the restoration of this fabulous art deco building. Monday 6th July at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.

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



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The background of the entire poster is a light cream color, decorated with several stylized flowers. Each flower has a smiling face with eyes and a wide, open mouth. The flowers are in various colors: blue, purple, green, and orange. The text 'Kids Eat Free' is written in a large, bold, blue, bubbly font with a black outline. The time '11-1pm' is written in a smaller, yellow, bubbly font with a black outline, positioned to the right of the word 'Free'.

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The next two full moons will be the Buck Moon (named after the male deer antlers growing this month) on 29th July, and the Sturgeon Moon (as the fish used to be plentiful at this time) on 28th August

Gelato in July

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WESTCOTT VILLAGE HALL UPDATE



We are delighted to announce that planning permission has been granted for the nine houses on the Furlong Road site and for the new village hall on the Institute Road site. Having passed this important milestone, and following the resolution passed at the General Meeting by the inhabitants of the village on April 29th, we have entered into a new phase of work. The trustees have engaged a project manager to work on internal design, detailed costs and prepare a tender pack which will be used to secure our building contractor for the village hall construction. We have also appointed a land agent to market and sell the Furlong Road site.

The trustees' focus is turning to fundraising. We have sufficient funds for the project manager to do the majority of the initial work, however there is a shortfall. If you are interested in donating to the project, please contact us at info@westcottvillagehall.com. In addition to donations, the Trustees are organising fundraising events. In May, 96 people enjoyed a Fish'n'Chip Quiz Night, hosted by our very own Andy Johnson, which raised £1,500. A big thanks to those who joined in and of course to Andy. Other events coming soon are:

- Rock Choir (19th June – which will have been held by the time you read this!)
- Westcott Open Gardens (28th June)
- Six Mole Hills Marathon Walk (10th October)

We look forward to seeing you at these events.

We would like to give our warmest thanks to everybody who has supported us - attended events, voted at meetings, baked cakes and donated raffle prizes. This is a truly community-led project. Everyone's patience has finally been rewarded, after a long journey through the planning system, and we are excited to be starting the next stage of giving Westcott a wonderful new Village Hall.

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Leith Hill is a brilliant place for a toddle to the top! So we hold our sponsored

walk there each year to raise much needed funds that support our learning journey and nursery resources. It's also a chance for us to spend time with our families and friends on a mini adventure to reach the 'castle' in the woods. Add in homemade cake and jelly worms at the summit and a roll down the hill (our parents absolutely love this part!!) and you've got a pretty perfect morning. Thanks so much to all who came or donated – it was a great morning.

We were recently given a grant to buy some brand new building blocks in which we can thoroughly lose ourselves with our imaginations as we create everything and anything! Our teachers gave us some interesting pictures of buildings and bridges from around the world to for inspiration. Of course we ended up with a more local structure – that's right Leith Hill again!

If you happen to live in the countryside there is a good chance you will get to see many bunnies playing in the fields, maybe even the famous Peter! Our Drama Llama teacher made use of our lovely garden and we donned big floppy ears and terribly twitchy noses, wiggly whiskers and big thumpy feet and finally a fluffy cotton tail before,

hopping around to look for Peter. We needed to warn him not to venture into Mr McGregor's garden despite the big juicy lettuces and carrots! Do you think he listened to us or lead us astray?!

We have been nurturing a collection of caterpillars – feeding them little bits of



veg and waiting patiently as they gradually wrapped themselves up in their sleeping bag like cocoons. We watched in wonder as they emerged as beautiful butterflies with soft colourful wings flapping away! Then the big day came when we had to set them free. They flew happily on to their new lives in the wild as we waved them off.

To celebrate our caterpillars flying the nest we decided to make delicious doughy butterfly pizzas! We mixed and kneaded and moulded a butterfly shape as a base then later chose from a variety of yummy toppings to create symmetrical patterns on their wings. A tasty dinner for our tummies!

If you would like to join our nursery family please don't hesitate to get in touch – we still have spaces for September. For more information or to book a show around call 07842 978823 or email abingercommonnursery@gmail.com We can't wait to meet you!

Kate Fairbrass

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SUMMER SHOW

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JOIN US AT
Westcott Flower Show
Autumn Exhibition
Saturday 5th September
Reading Room, Westcott



**Fruit, Flowers, Vegetables, Handicrafts, Flower
arranging, Home produce, Children's classes**

Timetable of Show:

8.30am - 11.00am Receipt and staging of exhibits
11.15am - 1.30pm Judging
2.30pm Doors open to public
4.00pm Prize Giving and Raffle

Entry Forms must be returned by 1pm on the Thursday before
the show and placed in the box at Nisalocal, Guildford Road,
Westcott.

No late entries will be accepted.

Exhibitors Free • Adults 50p • Children under 16 Free

CONTACT :

info@westcottgardenersclub.org.uk

Calling all Bake-Off fans

Step right up and tackle the village's baking showdown for
the title of Westcott's Best Baker at our Summer Flower
Show on Saturday, July 4th! Roll up your sleeves and whip
up the finest Rhubarb & Ginger Jam, Gazpacho, Malt Loaf,
Cheese Scones, or even Mary Berry's Tottenham Cake!

See full details about the home produce and all other Summer show classes at www.westcottgardenersclub.org.uk



Fancy some crafty competition?

Take on the challenge of being Westcott's Handicrafts or Home Produce master in our Autumn Flower Show (Saturday 5th September). Try your hand at making the best handmade knitted scarf, Christmas tree decoration, your own hobby item or enter for photography!

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WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP

Obituary Notices

It is with deep regret that the Westcott Local History Group records the deaths of two of its long-standing members in May. Both the Group's founder, Terry Wooden, and committee member Roger Christian passed away within days of each other. They were both born in 1936 from very different backgrounds and upbringings but met on the same Basic Training course for National Service and didn't meet again until their Westcott days. Funeral arrangements were not available at the time of compilation; a fuller tribute outlining their contributions to the Group and the wider village community will appear in a subsequent edition or newsletter.

Terry Wooden

Terry moved to Westcott in 1988 and quickly became active in local affairs with a particular focus on the village's history. In 1998 he led the establishment of the Westcott Local History Group and served as its chair. Under his leadership the Group developed into a prominent local organisation. Terry personally assembled and digitised a colossal archive of historical material, preserving sources that will benefit researchers and residents alike. Health issues led him to step back from active duties in 2016, but his significant contributions endure.



His stewardship and dedication to documenting Westcott's past will be long remembered by those interested in local history in Westcott and Dorking.

Roger Christian

Roger had been a committee member and for many years, as 'Scribe', contributed the column that reported the Group's activities in the village magazine. A resident of Westcott for more than four decades, he was a well-known and engaged member of the community. Roger was a committed member of Holy Trinity, maintaining his attendance even as mobility became more challenging. He tended the churchyard for many years and systematically recorded readable memorial inscriptions, creating a valuable record for



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years and served as a Trustee of the Reading Room. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the Westcott Gardeners Club, renowned for successful seed propagation and for generously sharing his surplus plants. He regularly participated in the village Flower Shows and various community events, and he supported recreational and cultural activities including music, travel, bridge and local tennis tournaments. Roger's active service and commitment to village life were exemplary; a true Gentleman, he will be greatly missed.

genealogical and historical reference. Roger held the post of Secretary of the Conservative Branch for twelve

**John Clachan and
Madeleine Brooks**



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Westcott “Baby Meals” is a highly valued community initiative running for over 25 years. The fabulous volunteer cooks buy, cook and deliver a (free!) hot meal for families a new baby, usually for 2 weeks. So during the new baby chaos, dinner is one less thing to think about!

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Anna: 07710 425487 annakemkers@hotmail.co.uk

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ST JOHN'S UPDATE

St John's Community Centre Update



The west end of St John's (as shown in this ChatGPT pencil sketch!) is one of the iconic views in the village, but also very exposed to the elements and in need of some love and care. Over the summer months you may well notice scaffolding going up to do some essential restoration work as we have commissioned two new windows in the same design as the original gothic ones (that are sadly collapsing with rot) and will also be restoring the cupola. Once done the cupola and other original white woodwork will be redecorated.

in the cupola (seen viewed from below), but for those who have been in the village longer than me you may well remember it being rung for services. An initial inspection looks like it is from the famous Whitechapel foundry in London, but we hope to find out a bit more when we have proper access.

The Chapel and Hub will remain open as normal throughout the work, and we are very grateful to Mole Valley District Council and the National Lottery Community Fund for their financial support of the project.



Simon Mabley



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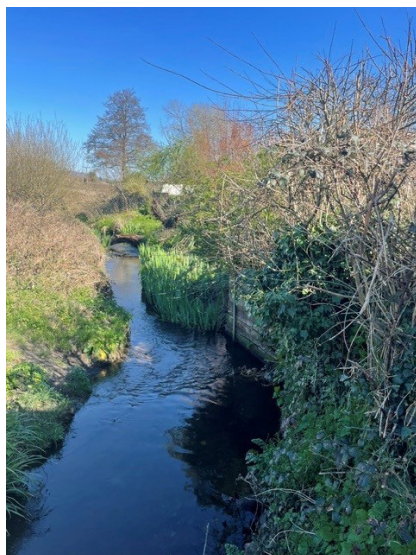
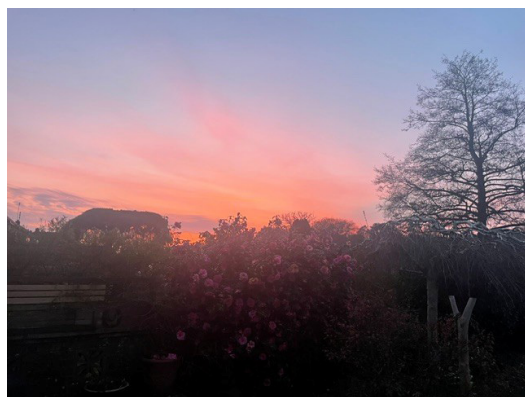




This shot across Landbarn Farm on a misty morning was taken by Anna Kemkers and in her words, made her think of 'the hope of a new day'



These lower 4 pictures were taken and sent in by Andy Cunningham, showing various aspects of Westcott



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6 MOLE HILL CHALLENGE
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Join our intrepid group of Westcottians, on the "6 Mole Hill Challenge" a 26 mile, marathon walk, raising funds for our Village Hall!

Starting and finishing in Westcott, we'll be walking up 6 of the picturesque Mole Valley hills, including Leith, Box, Holmbury and Ranmore. Shorter routes available. Suggested participation donation £1 a mile, but all donations and sponsorship welcome.

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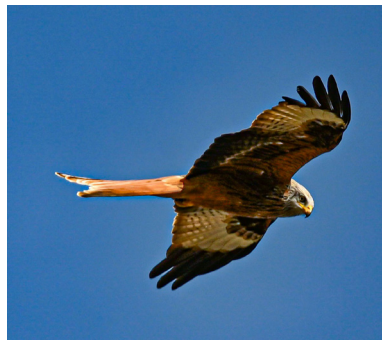
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Charlotte Michel is an independent travel advisor under Intrepid Travel UK, AATG membership 07786. Intrepid Travel UK are appointed agents of our AATG-protected suppliers



The bees were taken in Westcott and the fabulous bird pictures at the Wotton Hatch, all by Fiona Humphrey



The two photos showing our local area in all its glory were taken by James Friend



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This great sunset shot was taken from St John's, Wotton by Chris Smewing



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

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Tuesday 14th July 2026

Edouard Manet and Music: Dr Lois Oliver

Music was a constant theme in Edouard Manet's life and art. Regular musical soirées were held at the Manet family home. His pictures of musicians and their audiences range from major early canvases depicting itinerant gypsy musicians and Spanish dancers, through to paintings encompassing the full range of Parisian musical culture. Bringing together Manet's art and the music that inspired him, this lecture immerses you in Manet's world.

This meeting will start at 10.15am for the 2026 AGM in the Denbies Suite. Papers will be on the website by 20 June. The lecture will follow at 10.30. This will be the last lecture of the 2025/26 year. We look forward to seeing you again in October. For more information please visit www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk





THE CRICKETERS CIRCLE

Westcott's Home for Music, Conversation & Hospitality

The Cricketers Circle is bringing one of Westcott's most-loved buildings back to life as a place where people can gather, connect, celebrate and be inspired.

Following two highly successful inaugural Music Salons, The Cricketers Circle is establishing a programme of intimate cultural, social and community events in the great salon tradition — where music, conversation and hospitality come together.

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Justin Doyle is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the RIAS Kammerchor Berlin, one of the most eminent choirs in the world.

He has held the position of Professor for Choral Conducting at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin and Visiting Professor for Choral Conducting and Early Music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

Justin was Dorking Choral Society's Conductor early in his career and we are fortunate in continuing to have his support as the President of DCS.

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Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) – a new Consultation

It is important to bring to your attention a new consultation currently being run by Mole Valley District Council, which closes on 21st July, about the safeguarding of the Riverbank Surgery as a community asset. All residents are encouraged to share their views by responding to the consultation.

The updated WNDP was submitted to the Council in February for independent examination. The purpose of the examination was to test whether the updated WNDP met the basic conditions and other matters set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Examiner has completed his investigation and published his report. In summary, the Examiner found the plan to be sound, subject to some suggested modifications, most of which were minor in nature. However, as a result of a late submission the Examiner suggested one major change which is to remove the Riverbank Surgery from the list of safeguarded Community Assets under WNDP Policy 7.

MVDC have now considered the Examiner's report and published their own Decision Statement. The Council has decided they will

accept all of the modifications in the Examiner's report apart from the suggestion to delete the Riverbank Surgery from the list of safeguarded Community Assets. This decision was made in light of a letter submitted to MVDC by the Partners of Dorking Medical Practice which the Council considered provided new and relevant information.

As a result of the decision not to follow all of the Examiner's recommendations MVDC are now running what is called a 'Focused Consultation' with just one specific question; *"Should the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan safeguard the Riverbank Surgery for its existing use under Policy WNDP7 Community Assets?"* This new focused consultation runs until 5pm on Tuesday 21 July 2026. It is important to make your views known to MVDC on this issue by responding to the consultation. Full details can be read by using this link: <https://westcottvillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Focused-Consultation-Document-WNDP7-Community-Assets.pdf>.

Responses can be sent by email to planning.policy@molevalley.gov.uk or in writing to Planning Policy, Mole Valley District Council, Pippbrook, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1SJ. All of the background documentation in relation to this new consultation,

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including the Examiner's Report, the Council's Decision Notice and the letter from the Partners of Dorking Medical Practice can be viewed on the WNDP page of the MVDC website or by using this link to the WNDP pages of the Westcott Village website <https://westcottvillage.com/westcott-neighbourhood-development-plan/>

We are grateful to Dr Vishal Sagar of Dorking Medical Practice who attended the recent Westcott Village Forum meeting at the end of June to answer questions about the future provision of medical services in Westcott. Please take the time to respond to the MVDC consultation.

Westcott Village Forum
forum@westcottvillage.com

Janet Philpin - Obituary

Sadly, at the end of April, Janet Philpin passed away. Janet co-ran Westcott under 5's (WUF's) and many years later became Manager of Little Doves Pre-school until her retirement, when she continued to support Little Doves and helped out when cover was required. She also worked at the After School Club at the village school. Many Westcott and surrounding village children have passed through Janet's care.

Janet was always full of exciting ideas for the pre-school and was diligent in her planning so that all areas of learning were covered. She was very artistic, brought an enthusiastic element of exercise and dance into the setting, she had a 'can do' attitude, read a good story and was fun, all good attributes for an Early Years Practitioner.

She is survived by her husband John, and children Jamie and Cassie.

Jeannette Dobson



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DORKING MUSEUM

Dorking: Cycling capital of England:



Dorking Museum's summer exhibition traces the contribution

that Dorking has made, and continues to make, to the development of cycling nationally. Dorking has been at the forefront of both leisure and competitive cycling from its earliest days. In the early 1890s, the town was home to two-week festivals of cycling as summer camps attracted thousands to cycle on Box Hill and Ranmore. The appearance of early cars began a battle for the use of roads, and in 1893, the Dorking Cycling Club sought support from Lord Ashcombe for a Universal Lights Bill requiring vehicles to carry lights after dark. Cycling still remains an important part of Dorking life today.



The exhibition traces the story from the earlier history of cycling in Dorking to the 2012 Olympics, the Tour of Britain and the worldwide reputation of the Zig Zag. The Museum's 'penny-farthing' bicycle is now joined by an original 'boneshaker', the first type of true bicycle with pedals, which was called *velocipede* by its manufacturers. The exhibition features a wealth of information, photos and memorabilia.

Walking in Dorking: Enjoy one (or more) of our popular guided walks this month featuring:

- *Hidden Dorking: Features of Dorking that you may have missed before:* Sundays 12th July, 2pm, and 16th August, 11am.

- *Betchworth Castle with exclusive access to the Castle enclosure:*



Photo by Lois Leyland

Sundays 12th July and 9th August, 2pm.

- *The Deepdene Trail with exclusive access to the Hope family mausoleum:* Sundays 19th July, and 23rd August, 2pm. Cream teas are now available at the Clubhouse to Dorking Golf Club before or after our guided walks.

- *Four centuries of Architecture on Dorking's main streets:* Sunday 19th July, 2pm.



- *Dorking's Historic Pubs:* former and current pub sites, with tales of their services, owners and customers. Saturday 1st August, 6pm.

Please see dorkingmuseum.org.uk/guided-walks-around-dorking/ for details and booking of scheduled walks (please book in advance) or for private group bookings.

South Street Caves tours: One of Dorking's most popular attractions, the 17th century South Street Caves lie

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DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)



beneath Dorking's busy streets, where a series of staircases, galleries, wine vaults and chambers lead down to the 'Mystery Chamber', 50 feet below street level. Open days are Saturdays 4th July and 1st August, tours at 10am, 11am, 1pm and 2pm, each lasting about 45 minutes. For details and monthly open day bookings (which sell out fast!) see [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/south-street-caves/](https://www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk/south-street-caves/). Private group bookings may also be made, e-mail caves@dorkingmuseum.org.uk to arrange a date.

Family Activities at Dorking Library:

Pretend archaeological dig: Come and dig in the sand for old artefacts. What can you find? What does it tell you about the past? Saturday 18th July, 10-noon.

'There's a monster in the Caves!': If there was a friendly monster living in Dorking Caves, what might it look like and where would it eat, sleep, hide and have fun with friends? Saturday

25th July, 10am-2pm.

Summer Reading Challenge: Make a percussion instrument out of junk and use it to help you read to the beat of a poem. Saturday 22nd August 10am-noon. At Dorking Library, St. Martin's Walk, free, materials provided and children must be accompanied. We will also be represented at the Meadowbank Family Day, 19th July, so keep an eye out for us!

Surrey Hills Military Festival at Reigate Fort:

As part of the two-day festival, Kathy Atherton will be giving a talk on Dorking in the Great War, Sunday 12th July at 12.30. Please see <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/> for further details of the event.

Get involved: The Museum depends on its enthusiastic team of volunteers to maintain this valuable community resource. Maybe you could spare a few hours a month, with opportunities in an interesting range of key roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. See [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities](https://www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities) for further details.

Dorking Museum, 62 West Street. Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm, free entry. www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk. Visit [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/digital-guide/](https://www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk/digital-guide/). 01306 876591.



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4th at 12.00, lunchtime concert at St Martin's church, free

4th at 4.00, Dorking Choral Society at St Paul's church, £18

4th at 7.30, Holmbury Choral Society at St James' church, Abinger, £20

5th at 4.00, Bookham Choral Society at St Nicolas church, Bookham, £17

11th at 10am-4.30, Dorking Choral Society workshop, Crossways Baptist Church, £25

12th at 4.00, Leatherhead Choral Society at The Lighthouse, Leatherhead, £20

With this year marking the 250th anniversary of the American declaration of independence, two of our local choral societies are celebrating the occasion. Dorking choral society's concert, under its dynamic conductor Daniel Mahoney, will include a wide range of American music, from beautiful settings of American poets by Morten Lauridsen and Randall Thompson, via Copland's *Old American Songs*, to the lighter side of American music including Gershwin's *Summer Time*. Holmbury St Mary's concert, conducted by Cole Bendall, also includes a wide range of American music from Eric Whitacre, through Steve Reich to Simon & Garfunkel. The lunchtime concert at St Martin's church will also have an American jazz theme.

Bookham choral society is also holding its summer concert. Entitled *Music from Latin America*, the programme will include Martin Palmeri's *Misa a Buenos Aires – Misatango*. This exciting piece is a setting of the Latin mass in a musical style influenced by the rhythms of Argentinian tango music. Leatherhead choral society's concert – *Feelin' Groovy* – offers a programme of songs from the 60s and 70s.

Dorking choral society is also holding a special workshop day, presented by its distinguished President Justin Doyle. Justin is the conductor of the RIAS Chamber Choir in Berlin, which is recognised as one of the world's finest chamber choirs, and earlier in his career he conducted Dorking for several years with great success. The day will focus on JS Bach's *Magnificat*, which Justin has performed and recorded with his choir. The workshop is sure to be enlightening for all choral singers, and tickets can be booked on the choir website. There will be an informal performance at the end of the day.

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GREEN WESTCOTT

Is Climate Change Real?

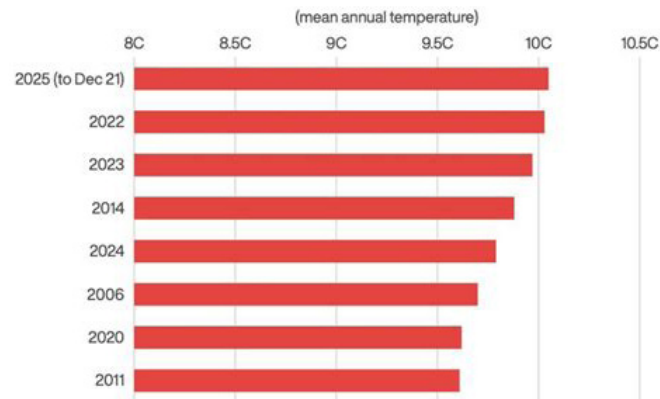
Having just experienced the hottest May on record where many of us felt ill prepared for such hot weather in Spring, followed by the first few days in June bringing torrential down pours across the county, it is hard to deny that the climate is changing. 72% to 77% of UK adults report being worried or fairly concerned about climate change. These figures are encouraging and yet, the intensity of that concern has softened (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2025). The proportion of adults who describe themselves as "very concerned" has unfortunately declined.

There is a growing lack of urgency about the rate and acceleration of climate change among the population which is very concerning. There may be many reasons for this,



from issue fatigue disillusionment and peoples' belief that individual impact is minimal, coupled with a lack of reporting of the facts by media and social media. There is an underlying narrative away from climate denial onto one that states that mitigation policies are too expensive, that renewable energy is unreliable or harmful, and that it is too late or pointless for individual countries to take action. This narrative acknowledges the warming trend but focuses heavily on a '*discourses of delay*', resulting in a growing trend of apathy among the population.

Warmest UK years on record



PA graphic. Source: Met Office - Records begin in 1884

Meanwhile the social media 'machine' pedals a narrative of conspiracy theories that preserve the myths that initiatives such as Net Zero are a restriction on human freedom. Influencers on social media disseminate disinformation which



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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

spreads like wildfire across social networks. The spread of disinformation is nothing new and has been seen as far back as the 1960s, where fossil fuel companies, politicians and think tanks perpetuated a discourse which minimised the impacts of climate change (European Digital Media Observatory, (EDMO) (2025)).

From Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement to Keir Starmer's U-turn on the Green Investment Pledge, you would not be wrong in thinking that world leaders certainly are not acting with any urgency about climate change.

So should we be concerned and how can we ascertain that the information we are receiving is evidenced and legitimate?

On 27th November 2025, Westminster Hall hosted a National Emergency Briefing on the climate and nature crisis. More than 1,200 people were invited, including, politicians, leaders from business, culture, faith, sports and media to hear from 10 of the UK's foremost experts on climate change and nature loss. Topics covered were: Weather Extremes, Climate, Tipping Points, Nature, Food Security, Health, National Security, Economics and Energy Transition. From this briefing those present were informed of the current scientific findings, gave comprehensive advice on how the impacts will affect us and offered

solutions to the problems faced.

Some highlights from the briefing I have laid out below:

- By 2050, 1 in 4 properties - 8 million in England - will be at risk of flooding.



- Heatwaves in Europe are intensifying faster than anywhere in the world and much faster than climate models predict.

- In 2022, nearly 3,000 people in England died from heat related causes - more than from road traffic accidents.

- The carbon dioxide we're putting in the atmosphere now is not being absorbed at quite the same level as it was previously by the biosphere.

- The UK is the first nation to have cut its emissions by 50% since 1990, but that excludes international aviation and shipping and our imports and exports. If you include those, the reduction is about 20% since 1990 - 0.6% every year on average.

- UK monitored wildlife populations have declined by around 19% since the 1970s, with one in six species now at risk of extinction.

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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

- Pollinators contribute over half a billion pounds annually to UK agriculture; but pesticides and habitat loss continue to push them into steep decline.

The State of the Climate report from 2024 stated - *"We are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster."* *"Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperilled. This is a global emergency beyond any doubt"*.

The People's Emergency Briefing

Hosted by Chris Packham and featuring extracts from the expert briefings, a short film – *the People's Emergency Briefing* - has been made. This is now available to watch across the UK in village halls, churches and



community centres, with the aim of bringing people together across local communities to hear the evidence and discuss how to respond.

If you are interested in informing yourself of the state of our world and what we can all do about it, please join us at a free screening of *the People's Emergency Briefing* at 7.30pm on Monday, 13th July in St John's Chapel, Furlong Road, Westcott. Tickets are limited, so please book to reserve your place at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/greenwestcott/2255526>

Whilst so many of these pieces of information are shocking and difficult to accept, they are the facts from leading experts in their fields. This needn't be a moment of despair, but one of hope if we all pull together to seriously address the issues of our precious world. After all, our very lives depend on it.

Nancy Lund

For a fully referenced version of this article please visit <https://greenwestcott.org/blog>

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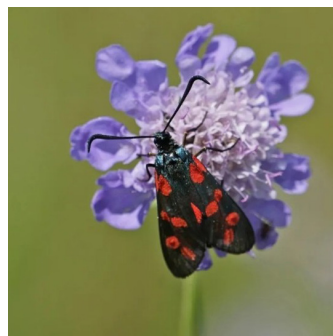


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Look out for day-flying moths

July is a good month to look out for moths, as many are now on the wing. While most moth species are nocturnal and so fly at night, there are plenty of day-flying moths to look out for. In fact, here in the UK there are actually more day-flying moths than there are butterflies.

One colourful species that is found throughout most of the UK is the Cinnabar moth, so named for the red on their hindwings and markings on their forewings. Their black and yellow caterpillars are often found munching their way through Common Ragwort. Head to grasslands and heathlands to look for them. Another red and black moth found in grasslands is the Six-spot Burnet. You can identify it by counting the six spots on each forewing – but be warned, sometimes the outmost spots can merge together.



Cinnabar Moth; Image courtesy RSPB

See more on our activities and photos or if you're interested in joining below
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 Instagram: @rspb_dorking
 Website: <https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/>

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