

# VillageView

WATERMEAD'S *FREE* QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Spring 2021 Vol.28 Issue 1

**Roman Park  
Community Trust**

**Watermead Wildlife Rarity**

**Parish Council  
Elections**

**Watermead Christmas  
Lights Competition**

**Photography Competition 2021**

Photography courtesy of James Bates

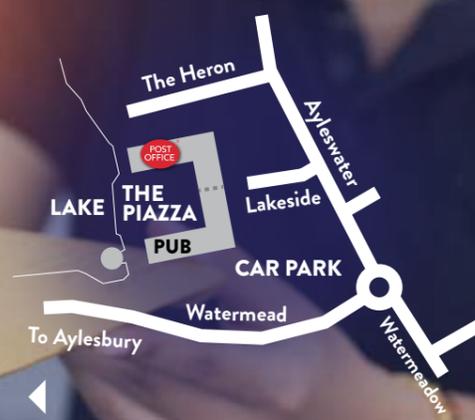


News from Watermead Parish Council & more!  
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# Parish Chairman's News

**W**elcome to the Spring edition of Village View. The last year has given us all challenges, losses and much to sadden and frighten us. Covid-19 has proved to be life-changing for everyone, not least for those who have tragically lost loved ones. I would first like to extend sincere condolences to everyone who has suffered such a loss. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

So much has changed, including the loss of so much personal freedom. However, our ability to walk in our beautiful surroundings, enjoy seeing friends and neighbours while out exercising and to know that we are not alone, despite being socially distanced has been immensely cheering.

For those vulnerable people who have been forced to self-isolate it has been less pleasant, but our fantastic group in Watermead Volunteer Army (now Roman Park Community Trust) has come together to offer help, assistance, food and friendship on the

phone or from a distance through the window to those needing them. It is testament to Watermead's extraordinary sense of community and care for others that the Army has gone from strength to strength since last Spring and has now formed into a charity. It is an absolute privilege to know each of our volunteers and to work with them. It makes me really proud to be involved and to live and represent Watermead in this community partnership.

**Christmas lights competition**  
Watermead's Christmas lights were amazing last year. Many are being kept switched on to cheer us during lockdown. It was almost impossible to choose an outright winner and as Cllr Schwab reports she was forced to award a large number of bottles of fizz – we hope they were enjoyed by all the worthy winners. Thank you to everyone who took part for all your hard work to at least allow us one Christmas tradition.

**Summer gardens**  
Last year's lockdown front gardens were magnificent. Doubtless, they reflected the amount of time everyone had to look after their garden last year. We hope that we can do it again, between us, to help brighten everyone's lives. Let's see what we can do this year – Spring is on the way! Gardening vouchers proved a popular prize so these will be awarded to the top three gardens.

**St James the Great, Bierton**  
It is now just a year since we welcomed Reverend Dan and his family to our Parish Church. Dan's podcasts and live and recorded services have been a lifeline for many during lockdowns and we are grateful for his contributions to our community, Roman Park Trust, Remembrance Day commemoration, and for being there for us. Dan has written separately in this edition. When we can return, do consider visiting St James the Great - a very warm welcome awaits.



**Chairman:**  
Cllr Sue Severn  
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**Parish precept 2021/22**

The Parish Council has reviewed the services it provides and after careful consideration resolved that the precept for 2021/22 would be increased by £2,500 to £80,000, an increase of 4.66% or £3.77 per annum for the average Band D house, which will allow us to maintain services at their current level.

The precept for a Band D house will be £84.59, against £80.82 for this year. Costs increased during the current financial year, particularly due to the cost of Covid-19 requirements. These included a large increase in the cost of litter removal. During the warmer months, with lockdown in force, very

large numbers of visitors came to Watermead to take their exercise. In doing so there was an enormous increase in the amount of litter dropped as well as dog poo on the land, and this resulted in a bill of some £4000+ extra for litter removal alone. Without our fantastic band of volunteers collecting the litter into a central area it would have been much more. We are most grateful to them.

Costs for grounds maintenance and repairs and replacements continue to form a large part of our budgeted expenditure and during the past year we have had to carry out extensive work to our trees, many of which were damaged during

high winds. (Devolved services payments from Buckinghamshire Council do not cover the whole cost).

The total income and budgeted expenditure are detailed in the charts below, expressed as a percentage of the whole. Shortfall between income and expenditure is met from reserve funds, allowing the PC to cover the cost of unexpected expense such as this year's tree works, additional litter costs and so on. Next year we have budgeted for improvements to lakeside paths, but for any major projects grant funding will first be sought from all available sources.

**Recreation & Leisure**

We hope to be able to

improve the children's play area behind the outdoor gym on the small lake with the provision of a basket swing, a gift to the Parish. We will continue to apply for grant funding to replace the outdoor gym equipment which has lasted extremely well but does need updating.

**Photographic competition**

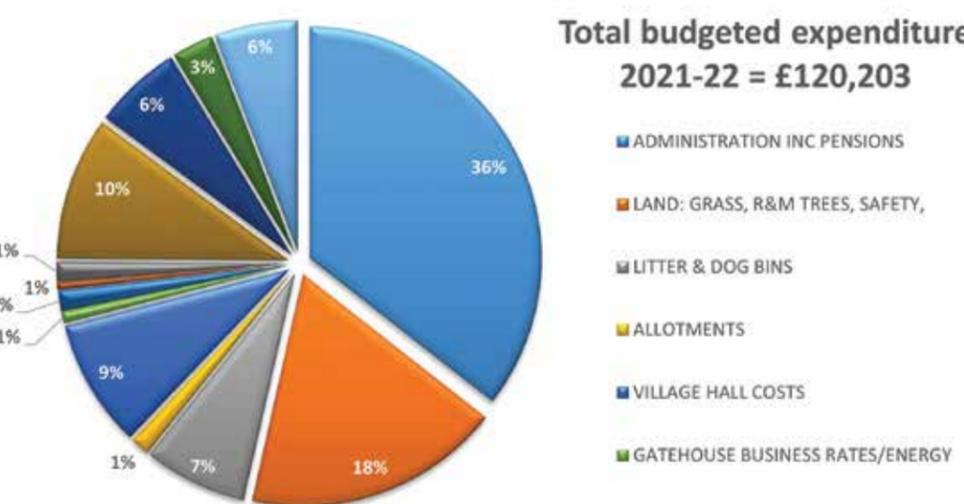
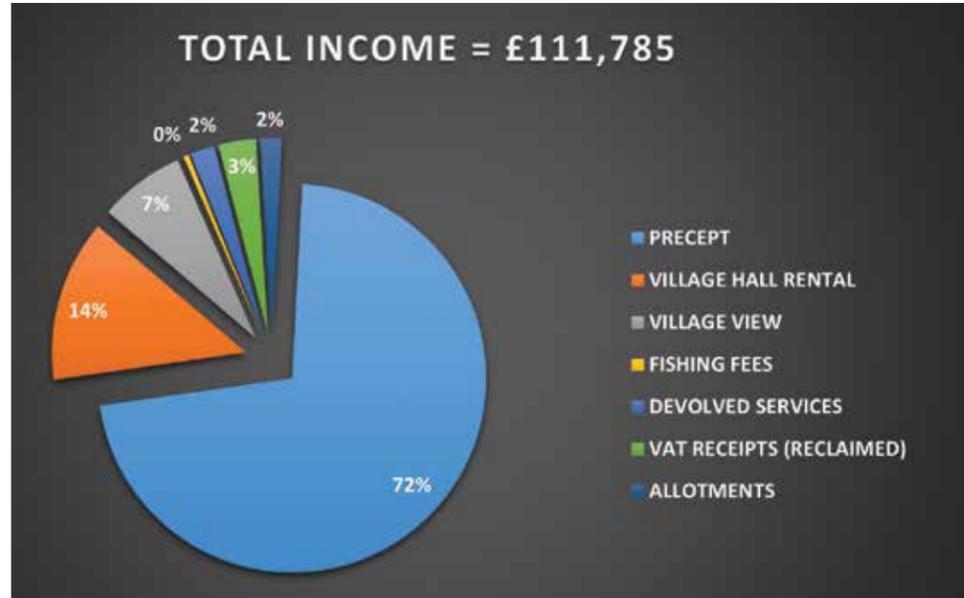
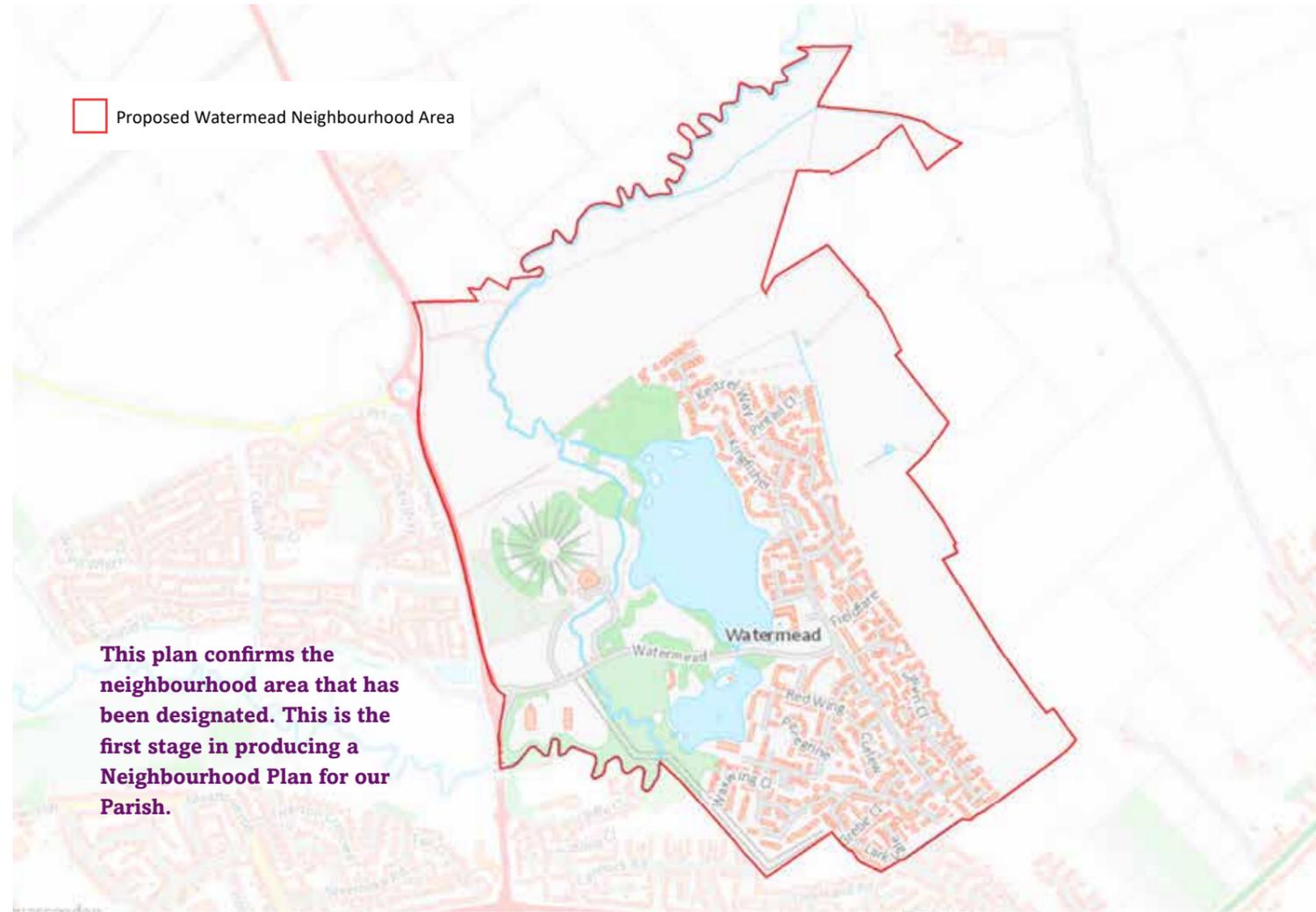
It's not too early to start taking pictures to enter this year's competition. Details can be found in this edition and on our website and 'All About Watermead' Facebook page. The last two years have shown how many talented photographers we have in Watermead and the exhibition was really excellent. This year's competition is extended to entrants wherever they live.

**Village View**

Our village magazine is highly successful, self-financing (due to the generosity of our advertisers) and the efforts of Phil Toler, our advertising manager, Mary Singleton, editor, and her team of volunteers. Articles and contributions are always welcome! Thank you all, as ever!

**Watermead Neighbourhood Plan**

A working group comprising residents, councillors and other key stakeholders is now working with our expert consultant to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Watermead. This is essential in today's planning environment with legislation due to change. We need to provide for a new demographic with many new and younger residents, as well as those who have lived here for a long time going forward. There is a need for recreation, leisure and provision for those working at home. The Plan group will be seeking to



engage with all parts of the community; your views are really important. Please respond to our quick surveys, which will be posted through your letterbox, preferably online for a chance to win an Amazon voucher!

We are also keen to talk to local businesses; there are very many companies registered in Watermead and with the change to working from home unlikely to be temporary, we are thinking of ways we can help and maybe provide some facilities for meetings, office space and so on. By answering the questionnaire you will help us to formulate a Plan which meets our needs both now and in the future. More about this in later editions. If you would like to help, make a comment, or just talk to one of the team about the Plan call Noreen on 01296 395211 to arrange a chat.

**Thank you**

This is the last edition of Village View before the election. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Council, (both current and those who have left during the last six years), our team in the office of Noreen and Michelle, all the contractors and experts who work with us throughout the year and our neighbours and friends in Watermead, especially our wonderful band of volunteers from litter pickers, Army members and events group for their help and support over recent times. Everyone has carried on regardless and continued to work hard to make Watermead special. It is and we are very proud to live and work here.

*Cllr Sue Severn, Chairman*

**TIRED OF POTHOLES  
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# Random Person Monique Foster

**Monique is a Trustee of Roman Park Community Trust who lives in Berryfields where she is a Parish Councillor. She moved to the area from a busy built-up area outside London and has found this area to be a breath of fresh air.** Moving here allows her to explore a part of the UK that she hasn't been in touch with before.

Monique has a lifelong progressive neurological condition called Multiple Sclerosis, in short MS. It reduces her mobility and causes fatigue. Of course, these conditions affect her daily life considerably but, by careful daily management, she tries to limit these symptoms from stopping her taking part in life and society.

**Her mantra is "Be all that you can be".**

A British Citizen, originally from the Netherlands, Monique moved with her husband to the UK twenty years ago. She has always worked in customer service related jobs, in the travel, aviation and electronics industries.

She learned to sail, joining Sailability, and competes in Hansa Class boats, National, European and World Championships. She won the UK National Championships, won silver in the Worlds, and bronze in the Europeans. Monique says that racing in these regattas in the UK and Europe is an activity in which she can test herself against the elements, which provides her with measured risk, camaraderie and a sense of achievement vital for mental wellbeing.

With MS creating a new chapter in her life she needed to move to a new future-proof accessible house and moving to Berryfields has been one of the best things they have ever done. Organising and communication are in her nature and

she enjoys solving problems and achieving goals successfully, and working collectively on projects that benefit the local community. She feels there is a strong sense of community spirit and that certainly contributes to wellbeing for all.

*Sue Severn*



# Roman Park Community Trust

**RESTORING DIGNITY. Roman Park Community Trust was formed by the amalgamation of Watermead Volunteer Army with Berryfields Parish volunteers with the simple aim of restoring dignity to families and others in need.** Working in community partnership with Watermead and Berryfields Parish Councils and Aylesbury Town Council, local schools in Berton, Buckingham Park, Berryfields, Aylesbury and Haddenham, MacIntyre Trust, Age Concern, Community Boards, HS2, Greggs, Fair Share, Tesco, Booker Distribution, Berryfields Consortium of developers, Proludic and other companies as well as individuals, we raise funds, collect food and obtain grant funding for projects to improve life for local residents.

Since May last year our volunteers have delivered tinned, dried and fresh food yielding over 7,000 meals to adults as well as lunch foods, snacks and treats for children. This has only happened with dedicated helpers tirelessly collecting food from doorsteps, shops and wholesalers every week frequently late in the evening. Emergency parcels of food, toiletries and other items are delivered seven days a week. Prescriptions are collected and shopping delivered, as necessary.

We are always available and easy to reach. No referral is needed, just a phone call, explanation of what's required and a chat to find out who needs help and their ages in the case of children.

Our free, confidential, advice service includes financial, legal, employment, housing and benefits with a back to work project writing CVs and mock interviews with qualified professionals. We signpost clients to additional sources of help. Refurbished laptops are donated to school pupils to aid homework and help them to avoid social exclusion.

The Trust also raises funds for community recreation and leisure facilities at Roman Park where the Community Larder and food storage facility is based. A project to combat loneliness is starting this Spring.

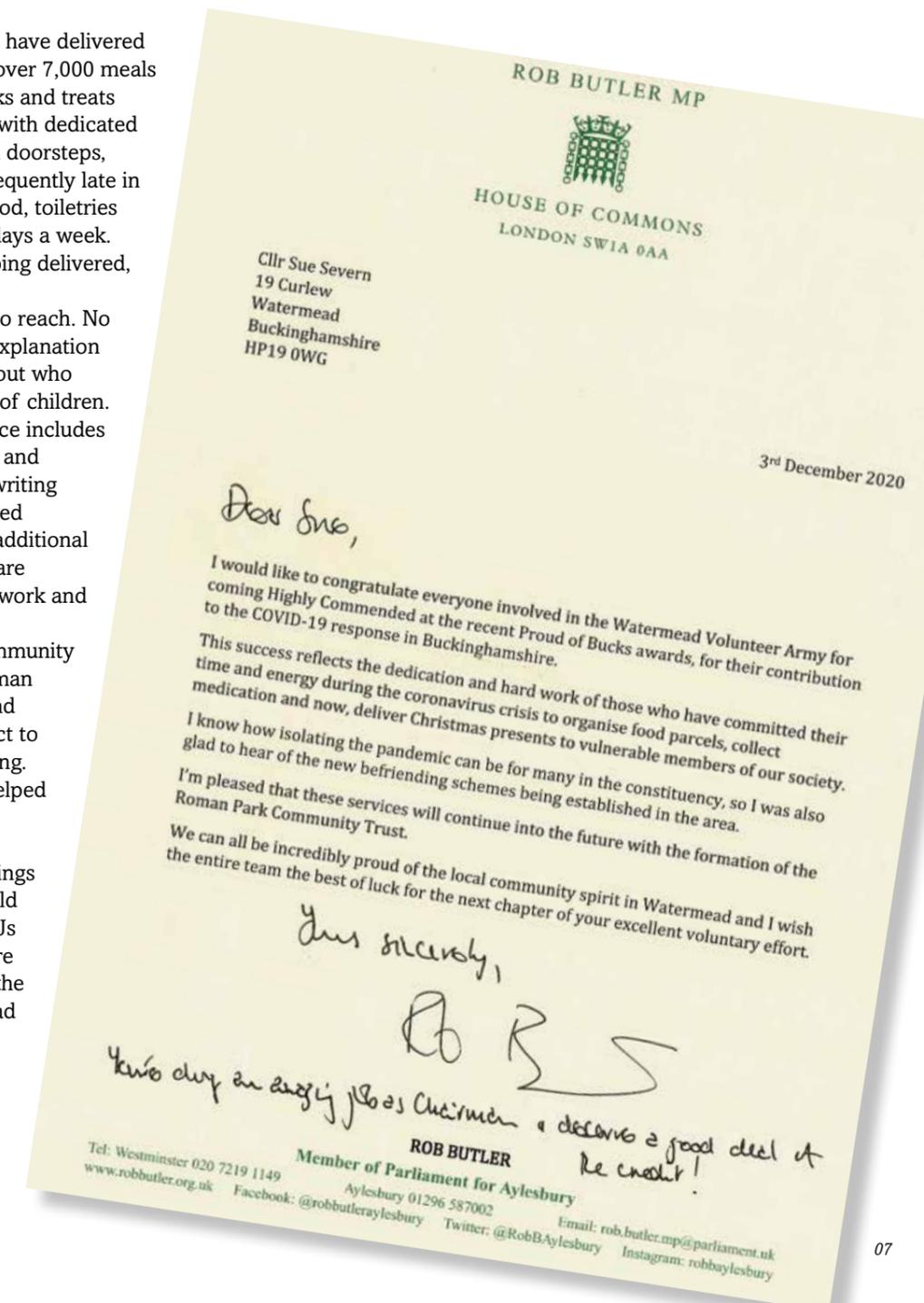
Our Christmas Stocking Appeal, helped families in need with 132 Christmas stockings for parents to give to their children on Christmas day. The stockings included pyjamas bought for each child (funds raised by HS2 staff having a PJs at work day!); wonderful presents were donated by parishioners at St James the Great, Berton, Berryfields, Watermead and Aylesbury Town Council and we included toiletries and other gifts. Each family received a large turkey and all the trimmings funded by a generous benefactor, while funding for food parcels for a further month was also received. We are so grateful for all donations. All money donated

goes directly to benefit families - no administration charges are incurred.

During Autumn 2020 we were honoured to receive a Pride of Bucks Award for Community work as well as being Highly Commended for our contribution to the Covid-19 response in Buckinghamshire. We are delighted and honoured.

Rob Butler MP wrote of his pride in the community spirit in Watermead and joined us in our delight at being able to grow and continue our work through the Trust.

*Cllr Sue Severn*



## IF WE CAN HELP, JUST ASK

Most of us need a little extra support at some time. We have skilled volunteers who can help with the following services.

- Weekly food parcels
- Housing benefits advice
- Budgeting
- Help with CV writing
- Mental health support
- Laptops for children

Please do not struggle alone, if you need some help please contact us.

**We do not judge. We do not pry. We want to help.**



## Roman Park Community Trust



*"I would be happy to say that you guys are absolutely amazing and have helped my family through a very hard time indeed"  
E ...Aylesbury*



**Restoring dignity**

[help@Romanparktrust.org.uk](mailto:help@Romanparktrust.org.uk) | 01296 925750

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

We could not provide all these services without the support and generosity of the local community.

If you have some time to give and would like to help please contact us.

If you are a local business looking to sponsor a project that makes a difference we would love to hear from you.

Alternatively maybe you could donate some of these foods for our food larder?

**Tins of soup, beans, veg and meat, cereal, biscuits and toiletries.**

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# Easter Recipes

## One-pan lamb with hasselback potatoes

Enhance the flavour of roast lamb with herbs and garlic, or you could try slices of anchovy, slivers of chilli or nuggets of feta pushed into the slits. Serves 6-8

### Ingredients

- 1 leg of lamb, about 2kg
- 2 garlic bulbs
- 15 sprigs rosemary
- 15 sprigs thyme
- 1.7kg medium-sized potatoes (Maris Piper work well), unpeeled
- 14 bay leaves
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced

### Method

1. Use a small, sharp knife to make at least 30 small, deep, incisions all over the lamb. Halve the garlic bulbs, so at the top the cloves fall away and at the bottom, they remain attached. Peel and slice the tops that have fallen away and keep the other halves for later. Use your fingers to push the slices into each slit. Next, pull off small sprigs of rosemary and thyme, keeping the stalks on, and poke them into the slits, too. Can be done a day ahead, then cover the lamb and chill. Remove from the fridge 1 hour before roasting.
2. Heat oven to 210C/190C fan/gas 7. Sit each potato between the handles of two wooden spoons and cut widthways at 3mm intervals – the spoon handles will stop you slicing all the way through. Slot a bay leaf into the middle slit of each potato. Tip the potatoes into a large roasting tin with the halved garlic bulb and the rest of the rosemary and thyme. Drizzle with half the oil and season, then toss to coat and turn the potatoes so they're all cut-side up. Nestle the lamb in the middle of the tin, pushing the potatoes to the outside, then rub the lamb with the rest of the oil and the lemon juice and season generously.
3. Roast for 1 hr 30 mins, basting the potatoes and shaking the tin occasionally, until the lamb is dark brown and the potatoes are crisp and golden. The lamb will be pink in the middle but cooked. For rare, cook for 10 mins less, and for well done, 15 mins more. Remove the lamb from the tin and leave to rest for 15 mins, putting the potatoes back in the oven if you need to. Serve drizzled with our green olive & herb dressing.

## Olive and herb dressing

### Ingredients

- 50g pitted green olives
- large handful chopped parsley
- large handful chopped mint leaves
- extra virgin olive oil, for binding
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- small pinch golden caster sugar

### Method

Finely chop the olives and tip into a bowl with the parsley and mint. Drizzle in enough olive oil to just bind everything, then add the red wine vinegar, golden caster sugar and a pinch of salt. Can be made a day ahead and kept in the fridge.

## No-peel braised carrots

Don't waste time peeling and chopping carrots – just braise baby carrots with butter, sugar and fennel seeds for the perfect side dish.

### Ingredients

- 300ml vegetable stock
- 300g baby topped carrots
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp fennel seeds, crushed

### Method

1. Heat the vegetable stock, then tip the carrots into a deep frying pan. Add the butter, sugar, fennel seeds and the hot stock. Season to taste.
2. Simmer, uncovered, over a medium heat for 25-30 mins or until the carrots are cooked through and the liquid is reduced and glossy.

The recipes above can be found at [www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/easter-recipes](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/easter-recipes)

## Traditional Easter Biscuits

Traditional Easter biscuits are lightly spiced, with currants and a sugar topping. Every recipe has its own twist – these have lemon juice and zest for a light zing.

### Ingredients

- For the biscuits:
- 100 g butter
- 90 g caster sugar
- 200 g plain/all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon mixed spice (2.5ml)
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg (2.5ml)
- ½ lemon, juice and grated zest
- 1 large egg yolk
- 75 g currants

For the topping:

- 1 egg white
- Caster sugar

### Method

1. Set the oven to 180°C/ 160°C fan/ gas mark 4/ 350°F
2. Grease the baking trays if you aren't using a liner
3. Grate the lemon rind. Juice the lemon
4. Put all the ingredients for the biscuits, apart from the currants, in the bowl of your mixer or processor and mix well to combine. (Butter, sugar, flour, spices, lemon zest and juice, egg yolk)
5. Scrape down and mix again. You will have a ball of dough of a soft consistency

6. Add the currants and mix in by hand
7. Gather the dough into a ball and squish onto your rolling surface. If you're using a magic liner or silicone sheet you don't need to dust with flour. Otherwise, you do.
8. Roll the dough to about ½cm thick and cut out rounds with the cutter, transferring to the prepared baking sheet.
9. Gather the dough together and roll and cut again until it's all used up. The dough is quite resilient and doesn't mind a few rollings out.
10. Bake for about 10-12 minutes
11. Remove from the oven and brush each biscuit, very lightly, with the lightly beaten egg white. Sprinkle with a little caster sugar and return to the oven for 4-5 minutes or until pale golden brown. For best results put the topping (egg white and sugar) on the biscuit one at a time.
12. Cool on the tray for 5-10 minutes then lift onto a wire rack until completely cool

NB Makes 20 Easter biscuits which can be stored in an airtight container. They will keep for 1-2 weeks.

Taken from [www.everydaycooks.co.uk/traditional-easter-biscuits/](http://www.everydaycooks.co.uk/traditional-easter-biscuits/)

## Barry the Slug

Barry the slug was unhappy with life,  
His friends could tell just by looking.  
He stayed in the ground, until he was found,  
By the slug who did most of the cooking.

"Get up and go out," said the cook to the slug;  
The glumness was getting him stressed.  
But the slug wasn't looking at the slug who was cooking,  
He'd become so incredibly depressed.

"I'll chop off my head," he eventually said,  
But the other just laughed at the warning.  
To be honest the slug, is a short-lived bug,  
And they'd all be dead by the morning.

Michele Toler

# What's on ...around Watermead

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") came into effect on 4th April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (for a specified period) to attend the Watermead Parish Council meeting via video conferencing on the third Thursday of the month commencing at 7:30pm for the purpose of transacting the following business. Members of the public who wish to join/attend the meeting will need to request a link from the Parish Clerk. Please email noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk or call 01296 395211 / 792137. In the event you wish to ask a question we will ask for a copy in advance to ensure inclusion.

There are no events planned at the time of writing for 2021.

## Our regulars in the Village Hall...

**Parish Council**  
3rd Thursday of the month  
(excluding August & December)  
Public meeting - 7.30pm  
Council meeting - 8.00pm

**Footsteps Pre-School**  
Monday - Friday 7.30am to 2pm  
Closes 12.30pm Tuesdays  
07743 871369  
watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk

**Scrapbooking / Card Making Any Craft Of Your Choice Crafty Chicks**  
4th Friday of the month from 6.30pm  
Contact Daphne 393131

**Soul Space**  
Every Sunday evening,  
£5 a session, Pre-booking advised  
Holly Miller 07845 435619

**Aylesbury & District Philatelic Society**  
Second Wednesday of the month  
7.30 - 10.00pm  
Peter Barnes 612913

**Kumon Maths**  
Monday & Thursday  
2.30 - 6pm  
Susan Jones 747469

**Jo Jingles**  
Tuesdays - Music & Movement  
1.30 - 2.15pm 18 months upwards  
2.30 - 3.05pm 6 months to walking (approx 18 months)  
Debbie Bird 625599

**Drawing for Fun – Art Classes**  
Every Wednesday 2.30-5.30pm  
Contact Judith Muston  
01296 395211

**Castielli Dance School (for children)** Monday 6-7.30pm  
Janet Castielli 433956  
www.luv2dance.co.uk

**Bring Your Own Crafts Afternoon**  
Every Wednesday 2.30-5.30pm  
Judith Muston

Are you looking for a venue? Watermead Village Hall is the ideal venue for young children's birthday parties, meetings and christenings, etc. Or are you an organisation looking for a regular venue? If so, to book the Village Hall or the Bandstand please contact Noreen Shardlow on 01296 395211 / 792137

## Advertise in the Village View 50% discount for Watermead residents

Resident Rates – 1/4 page – £25 1/2 page – £50 full page – £100  
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Colour is extra – £30 – 1/4 £60 – 1/2 £120 – full page.

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## View from Westminster

As I write this column in early February, we start to see light at the end of the tunnel in the battle against coronavirus. Nonetheless, the restrictions on our everyday lives remain severe and our local hospital is still under severe pressure. Most children are trying to study at home and our favourite bars, restaurants and shops remain closed.

I am grateful to all residents in Watermead for everything you are doing to stem the spread of the virus, and to assist neighbours who need some extra help at this very difficult time.

I have mentioned before how impressed I have been at the community spirit engendered by the crisis, and this is apparent again now with many local people volunteering at vaccination centres. I know how frustrating it was to have to wait for the rollout of vaccinations locally, and I pressed the Government repeatedly to speed up supplies to our area – including with Boris Johnson at Prime Minister's Questions. Thankfully, several centres are now up and running in the Aylesbury area, and thousands of local residents have now received jobs. It's important to emphasise that the NHS

will never ask you pay for a vaccination, so please don't ever give details of your bank account or credit card in response to a social media post about jobs; unfortunately there are scammers who are disgracefully trying to exploit people even in the midst of a pandemic.

Needless to say, coronavirus has dominated much of my work at Westminster, but there is still occasionally time for other meetings, and earlier this month I had a very useful roundtable with representatives of the county's parish councils. They are fantastic stewards of our local communities as exemplified by Watermead's own parish council, which always advocates very strongly on behalf of residents. Long may it continue!



Robert Butler MP

## Thames Valley Police – Neighbourhood update

Police will be cracking down on drivers who use their mobile phones while driving as part of a new national campaign launching on Monday 1 February 2021. Thames Valley Police (TVP) and Hampshire's Roads Policing Unit will be focusing on detecting and prosecuting drivers who use their phones behind the wheel.

Research has shown that using a mobile phone can impair your ability to drive more than if you were driving whilst over the drink drive limit. You are also twice as likely to be involved in a fatal collision from texting while driving than you are from drink driving.

Road Safety Sergeant David Hazlett of the Joint Operations Roads Policing Unit said the following:

- Most drivers are responsible and do not use their mobile phone whilst driving, but the few that continue to take risks by texting, surfing the internet or making or receiving calls are putting the safety of all other road users and themselves at risk of harm.
- You are much less aware of what's happening around you and fail to see road signs, maintain a proper lane position or a steady speed. Drivers end up feeling more stressed and frustrated and are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front or enter unsafe gaps in traffic.
- Additionally, it has been shown that motorists are four times more likely to be involved in a collision whilst using a mobile phone or being distracted in a vehicle and your reactions are 50 percent slower.
- Think twice before answering a call using hands-free, and never take your eyes off the road.
- Challenge your friends and family to do the same as it is unacceptable to use a mobile phone whilst driving. It is not worth the risk.

You can follow the police's activity on social media, @tvprp on Twitter and TVP Roads Policing on Facebook, and by searching the hashtags #ItsNotWorthTheRisk and #StandingUpforHangingUp. See more at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/prevent-personal-fraud/](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/prevent-personal-fraud/)

**Fake NHS vaccine messages sent in banking fraud scam. Fraudsters are sending out bogus text messages about the coronavirus vaccine in an attempt to steal bank details.**

The scam tells recipients they are "eligible to apply for your vaccine" with a link to a bogus NHS website, trading standards officers have

warned. That, in turn, asks for personal information and - crucially - bank details "for verification".

The warning comes the same day as MPs heard that Covid is leading some people into the net of pension fraudsters. The fake NHS message is one of a range of scams which have sought to take advantage of the pandemic and the isolation and legitimate worries of potential victims, according to the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

Others have included people travelling door-to-door selling counterfeit or useless protection equipment, or fraudsters claiming to be from the official test and trace service and demanding payments. The latest scam is preying on those elderly or vulnerable people who are fully expecting to receive legitimate information about their vaccine.

Health authorities have stressed they would never ask for an individual's banking details.



FALSE

# Supporting Lymphoedema by writing your Will

**I moved to Watermead just over five years ago and just love it here. I find the people very friendly sharing a warm smile and a good morning or afternoon when out for daily exercise or engaging in conversation at the local shop even whilst wearing our masks.** About that, this past year has been challenging for all of us. We have had to adapt to change, either professional or personal and in most cases both; I am sure you will agree with me this has not been easy and, in some cases, sadly tragic through the loss of loved ones. Yet we must never give up hope for that is what keeps us going.

I have always admired the fantastic dedication and work that Florence Nightingale Hospice does for us in our community of Aylesbury and greater Buckinghamshire. Hospice care gives as much support for friends and families as for the patient. The nursing teams are a wonderful group of individuals that need our help which includes the team that work in the Lymphoedema Clinic. Lymphoedema is a condition often associated with cancer treatments where fluid builds up in the body causing swelling. The clinic at the Hospice provides support to patients plus therapy

to alleviate the swelling.

I have decided to raise the money that the clinic needs to carry out a refurbishment of the clinic room. Sue Lawrence, the Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Clinic said "if the room and cupboards were designed to maximise storage and access, it would make a significant difference. It would be much easier for us to access equipment and documents and provide a nicer environment for patients.

Under current Covid-19 regulations, clinical rooms need to be easy to clean with minimal items left out which would be much more convenient if storage space was improved and designed specifically for how the room is now used." There are currently 450 local people using this clinic which is in a space that hasn't been updated for 20 years.

I have always taken great pleasure in finding ways that I can help others. And to that end I decided to provide my services as a Will Writer serving both my local community of Aylesbury and nationwide. I believe it is very important to have your Will set in place to protect your loved ones. I can help you formulate a new or updated Will, Lasting Power of attorneys, funeral plans and perhaps more complex

forms of estate planning to protect your loved ones.

The proceeds will be going to the Lymphoedema Clinic. So not only will you be protecting your family and loved ones, but you will also be helping the patients and families going through this horrible debilitating disease at the same time. So please either call or email me for our initial chat.

It is so important, especially in these uncertain times, that we are looking after each other.

*Darren St Mart, Estate Advisor  
01296 823036 [www.willservices.co.uk](http://www.willservices.co.uk)*



# The Great Big Art Exhibition invites the UK public to get creative

**R**unning until the end of April, Firstsite is encouraging the UK to draw, sculpt and paint to themes set fortnightly by artists such as Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Jeremy Deller, David Shrigley and Ai Weiwei. With more time on our hands now is a perfect time to get creative, something that The Great Big Art Exhibition, launched on 28 January, aims to inspire. People across the UK are invited to take part in a collaborative exhibition that sees the nation encouraged to draw, sculpt, paint and build their own piece of art and to stick it up on their window, or any part of their house for that matter. Running until April 2021, a selection of renowned artists are set to choose a different theme each fortnight. First, it's Antony Gormley who's opened the show with a theme of animals. Sonia Boyce is following with a theme of portraits, while other artists include Etel Adnan and Simone Fattal, Anish Kapoor, Tai Shan, Jeremy Deller, David Shrigley, Ai Weiwei and Ryan Gander.

The exhibition is presented by Firstsite,

Colchester, in order to celebrate its tenth anniversary and supported by the Plus Tate Network. Those involved in the exhibition can work individually or as a community, meaning they're able to join up 'virtually' with others taking part. You can use any material to make the artworks, just as long as you stick to the theme every couple of weeks. Then, coinciding with the exhibition closing, a patchwork of artworks will be revealed by the summer.

Apart from Firstsite, other partners of The Great Big Art Exhibition include Art UK, The Big Draw and Voluntary Arts – it's also supported by Arts Council England. Firstsite will ensure that key works will be available to download, to then be used as a template or for colouring in as inspiration. Various galleries and museums have selected works that they think will spark some creativity, alongside

the directors of the National Gallery, Tate, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery, National Galleries of Scotland, V&A, National Museums Liverpool, Royal Academy of Arts, the Ashmolean Museum, The Courtauld, The Wallace Collection and Arts Council Collection. See more at [www.firstsite.uk](http://www.firstsite.uk)



## Tea Break Quiz



1. At which sport did David Moorcroft set world records?
2. Who wears a chasuble?
3. Where would you hurt if you were kicked on the tarsus?
4. Which animal can be red, arctic, bat eared and fennec?
5. What does the word piliferous mean?
6. Which King was the last Emperor of India?
7. Who died first Gilbert or Sullivan?
8. What type of fruit is a jargonella?
9. Who wrote 'Hoe The Leopard Got His Spots'?
10. If you nictitate at someone what do you do?
11. On the 14th April 1912 what occurred off Newfoundland?
12. The city of Philadelphia was founded by which religious group?
13. Which ship sent the first SOS?
14. Which Palace is the official home of the French President?
15. What name is given to a score of 111 in cricket?
16. If E=mc<sup>2</sup> according to Einstein, what does m stand for?
17. What is the motto of the Scout movement?
18. Vehicles from which place use the international registration letter V?
19. Who flew The Spirit of St Louis?
20. What replaced 'purchase tax' in 1973?

Answers on page 21

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# Take the challenge to reflect in 2021

**Three siblings are encouraging Buckinghamshire residents to join them in an 80-mile hike across the Chilterns to remember loved ones and raise much needed funds for Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity.** By walking from Swindon to Aylesbury, Adam Dalwood and his family will be taking literally thousands of steps to remember their father who died at Florence Nightingale Hospice in 2018.

Adam, sisters Kelly and Hannah, and one of their partners David, will be undertaking the four-day guided hike along The Ridgeway, Britain's oldest road, on behalf of the Hospice, where their father Robin was cared for before he passed away.

Such was the compassion and care of hospice staff that the family are calling on fellow residents of the county to take part, whether that is to remember a loved one, raise much needed funds for a great cause, or just as a way to overcome the lockdown blues.

Robin spent his last two weeks at the Hospice and, thanks to the staff, he received an incredible level of care and compassion, even managing to marry his long-term partner. Robin and Kim Dalwood had been together for over 25 years but had just never got around to tying the knot. Adam said: "I think they just forgot to do so." But after losing a battle against pancreatic cancer, nurses and staff at the Hospice helped organise the most important item on their bucket list. In a room bedecked with fairy lights and ornaments brought in from home by staff, Robin reaffirmed the love he had shared with his beloved Kim.

"When my father was admitted to the Hospice, it was a shock and, at the time I was just so angry, as that was when we understood he was close to the end of his battle," Adam explained. "However,

I couldn't be angry with the nurses, I will never forget what they did for my father. For the two weeks he was at the Hospice, they went beyond out of their way. We will be eternally grateful and taking part in the Ridgeway Hike is something positive to do to remember our dad and a small way to support the Hospice to provide such an amazing service to anyone who needs it."

Adam and his family are encouraging others to join the Florence Nightingale Hospice Ridgeway Hike on 3 to 6 June 2021. Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity has been badly affected by the pandemic and, with the announcement of further restrictions at the start of the year, has closed all its shops again and most fundraising activities have come to a halt. However, the Hospice is continuing to provide high quality end-of-life care and support to patients and their families, either in the In-Patient Unit or at home.

For more information about the Hike visit [fnhospice.org.uk/ridgewayhike](http://fnhospice.org.uk/ridgewayhike) or contact fundraising [@fnhospice.org.uk](mailto:@fnhospice.org.uk) with any questions.



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## Book review

The Boy from Aleppo by Sumia Sukkar

**A first-person narrative of Syria's civil war is bound to make a harrowing read – even more so when the narrator is an autistic teenager.** As the battle between government forces and the rebels (ISIS is never named) intensifies, 14 year old Adam, already traumatised by his mother's death from cancer, finds the bombings and the disappearances impossible to understand. Painting, in vibrant colours, is his only refuge. "I'm painting the blood on the floor with real blood." Grief drives Baba, his father, into dementia. Yasmine, the beloved sister who has replaced Adam's mother as his protector, is abducted. Then, as Aleppo self-destructs, the family flee the city and take the road to Damascus as refugees.

Sumia Sukkar has done a brilliant job of entering the autistic mind. She gives Adam a unique perspective: "Maybe bad angels haunt our town, or maybe this is the bad angel's town." Inevitably one is reminded of Christopher in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and Dustin Hoffman's Raymond in Rain Man, Adam's unforgettable progenitors. Two brutal scenes are told from Yasmine's viewpoint, and I rather wish the author had done the same with other family members.

This is a book from the "Misery Memoir" shelf, which I don't often pick from. It's an intensely disturbing portrait of the unending agony of Syria. Terrible to think that terrors like this still constitute the everyday life of people not only in Syria, but in Iraq, in Libya and in Yemen. Will the unlearned lessons of history ever stop being repeated? *David Gee*



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# Watermead Wildlife Rarity

**This is a summary of rarities seen at Watermead this winter, not an extensive list, but those of special note. All photos were taken at Watermead by Dan Forder.**

**1. YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** (from northern Russia): You may have noticed a fair few birdwatchers at Watermead in the last few weeks - on 6th of December in thick fog I found a YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER beside the large lake near the memorial garden - a tiny warbler from Siberia that usually winters in south-east Asia. A few visit the east coast of Britain each autumn on their travels, usually end of October to November, but finding one inland in December is more unusual. Then on 15th December I found it once again in the Pines that run along the spine road, and it has stayed in the area ever since - it seems to have chosen Watermead as its wintering grounds over

Nepal, Myanmar or Thailand! A rare bird in Buckinghamshire.

If you'd like to see it, look for a tiny olive bird (circa 9cm long) with yellow eye-stripe and two light bars on each wing, feeding on insects in trees (at this time of year Pine Aphids are still abundant, hence its preference for the Pine Trees around the spine road). It can often be found accompanying the mixed flock of Long-tailed Tits, Blue Tits, Goldcrests and wintering Chiffchaffs. On 14th January it was accompanied by a FIRECREST (the rare cousin of the common Goldcrest) - FIRECREST is also a rare bird in Buckinghamshire during winter, though Wendover Woods is an excellent site for finding them during the breeding season.

**2. SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF** (from northern Russia): On 19th January I found a SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF in the wooded area on the

north-west side of the large lake, which I picked up on from its call. Similar to our Common Chiffchaffs, of which some do now over-winter, SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF is actually rarer than the Yellow-browed Warbler in the UK. A rare bird not just in Buckinghamshire, but nationally.

**3. GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (from Greenland): On 31st December, as I was watching the large lake, a GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE arrived and joined the Greylag Goose flock on the large lake - this is the first ever record of this species in Buckinghamshire and an exceptionally rare bird in inland England.

The bird wasn't present the next day but did re-join the flock at the far end of the large lake for a short while on the morning of 2nd January. It then departed Watermead and was later re-found in Northamptonshire, where it has stayed since, identified as the

same individual from the unique pattern of black bars on its belly. Two of the resident geese at Watermead have attracted attention since due to having some similarities to White-fronted Geese, but these are both in fact Canada Goose x (domestic) Greylag Goose hybrids.

There are good numbers of Russian White-fronted Geese in the country at the moment as this winter has seen an unprecedented influx of birds from Russia that would usually be wintering in eastern Europe, and it was this species that I was hoping to find at Watermead, but to find a Greenland White-front is exceptional. The world population is only circa 20,000 and they all breed in Greenland, wintering mainly along the coasts of western and Northern Ireland, and western Scotland. Inland birds, especially in England, are very rare.

**4. RUSSIAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (from northern Russia): On 16th January I did eventually manage to find a RUSSIAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE at Watermead, a juvenile, which was present on and off over the following week. A rare bird in Buckinghamshire.

**5. PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** (from Greenland, Iceland or Svalbard): On 26th October I found a PINK-FOOTED GOOSE at Watermead, also rare in Buckinghamshire, though not as rare as the geese above. It was present on and off through to end of November when it then departed, only to return occasionally over the first three weeks of January.

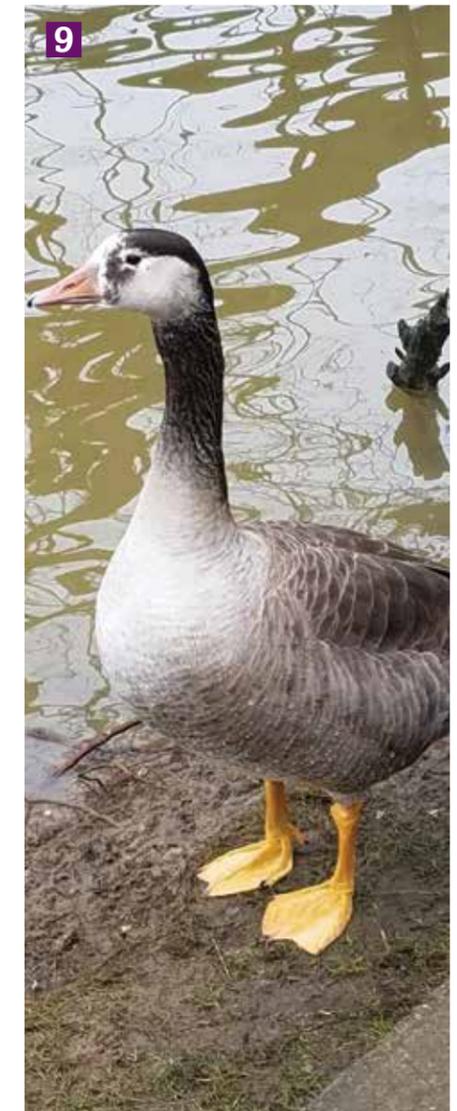
**6. WHOOPER SWAN** (from Iceland or north-eastern Europe): On 20th November, 3 WHOOPER SWANS stopped off on the large lake briefly. As I walked from my flat on Guillemot Way I heard them calling, so quickly jogged over to the large lake just in time to see them before I had to leave, as they did also. A rare bird in Buckinghamshire.

**7. GREAT WHITE EGRET** On 2nd December I saw a GREAT WHITE EGRET at the wooded area on the north-west edge of the large lake. Twice the size of a Little Egret, closer to Grey Heron in both length and wingspan. A rare bird in Buckinghamshire, though this species is now starting to colonise the UK, originating from eastern Europe and usually winter in the Mediterranean or Africa.

**8. YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** On 20th October there was an adult YELLOW-LEGGED GULL at Watermead, then 2 adults on 2nd of November (following on from 1 adult and 2 juveniles on 9th August). This species is the southern and western-European counterpart to our Herring Gull, having yellow legs and a red orbital ring to the eye, as opposed to the pink legs and yellow orbital ring of a Herring Gull. This is a scarce bird in Buckinghamshire but the population is increasing nationally.

**9. A HYBRID BETWEEN A CANADA GOOSE AND A GREYLAG GOOSE** judging by the white on its face it is most likely a domestic/farmyard Greylag Goose with white colouring. Certainly a distinctive bird.

If you would like help with identifying something you've seen, want to share a sighting or photo, or require information about wildlife or conservation in general, please feel free to send me a tweet on Twitter @DanFWildlife or alternatively send me a message through my Facebook Page @DanFWildlife.  
Dan Forder





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# Looking to grow vegetables this year? Container crops to sow during March

**All kinds of vegetables can be grown in containers, including chillies, tomatoes, Swiss chard and even potatoes. Even if you have a dedicated veg patch, it's still worth growing some extras in pots too – maybe herbs and salads near the house for easy picking.** Bear in mind that crops in pots need feeding and watering more regularly than those grown in the ground – consider setting up a watering system if you're going on holiday. Look out for pests, such as slugs and snails.

**Broad beans** are a productive, easy-to-grow crop. Grow either for the tender leafy shoot tips (great in salads), or plant dwarf varieties for the beans. Very young pods can be eaten whole. How to sow: for shoots, sow seeds close together in seed trays filled with multipurpose compost, 2cm deep. Grow on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. For pods, sow directly into a pot that's 30cm deep. Evenly space the seeds, 10cm apart. Container size: for shoots, containers or trays at least 10cm deep – try wooden crates. For pods, at least 30 x 30cm wide and deep Recommended varieties: 'The Sutton', 'Crimson Flowered', 'Statissa'

**Chard** makes a very attractive container plant. Pick regularly for baby leaves or allow to grow for larger leaves that can be steamed like spinach. How to sow: sow three seeds into individual seed modules filled with seed compost. Cover with 2cm of compost, water well, label and place on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. Discard the weakest seedlings. Container size: three plants in a 35 x 35cm pot. Recommended varieties: 'Bright Lights', 'White Silver 2', 'Lucullus'.

**Chillies** are very productive in pots and can be grown on a sunny windowsill, or in a greenhouse. Choose compact, small-fruited varieties and early ripeners for a more reliable harvest in cooler weather. How to sow: fill 9cm pots with seed-sowing compost, water well, then place four seeds on the surface of the compost. Sprinkle a light covering of compost over the top and label. Cover with a propagator lid or clear plastic bag held in place with an elastic band to create a mini greenhouse. Place on a sunny windowsill. Remove the plastic bag as soon as seedlings appear. Container size: 22cm diameter for compact varieties; taller varieties need larger pots Recommended varieties: 'Hungarian Hot Wax', 'Rouge de la Bresse', 'Cayennetta'

**Chives** are great for container growing as they don't take up much space. Pick regularly to encourage new leaves. The flowers also attract pollinators. How to sow: sow a pinch of seeds into individual seed modules filled with seed compost. Cover with 1cm of compost, water well, label and place on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. Discard

the weakest seedlings. Container size: at least 13cm diameter Recommended varieties: Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), 'Cha Cha' chives, garlic chives (*A. tuberosum*).



**Peas** to be grown on a windowsill for tender pea shoots that are ready to pick within four weeks of sowing, or grow dwarf varieties for pods. Choose hardy, early varieties for sowing in March. How to sow: for shoots, sow seeds close together in seed trays filled with multipurpose compost, 2cm deep. Grow on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. For pods, sow directly into a pot that's 30cm deep. Evenly space the seeds, 5cm apart. Container size: for pea shoots, sow in seed trays at least 5cm deep; for pods, grow in pots 30cm wide Recommended varieties: 'Feltham First' and 'Kelvedon Wonder' for shoots; 'Tom Thumb' for pods.

**Kale** is perfect for a semi-shaded spot. Grow in pots for cut-and-come again crops of young leaves to use in salads, or lightly steamed as a veg. As kale crops over a long period, a deep pot is best. How to sow: sow three seeds into individual seed modules filled with seed compost. Cover with 2cm of compost, water well, label and place on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. Discard the weakest seedlings. Container size: at least 30cm deep Recommended varieties: 'Cavolo Nero', 'Red Russian', 'Dwarf Green Curled'.

**Potatoes** are easy to harvest when grown in pots – no digging is needed. Grow smaller salad varieties rather than maincrops, which need more space. How to grow: start chitting potatoes at the start of March by placing the tubers in old egg boxes or seed trays on a cool, light windowsill to encourage shoots to form. Once the weather is warmer, plant the sprouting tubers in to a large pot or sack on top of 10cm of compost, then cover with an additional 10cm layer of compost. Container size: at least 40 x 40cm, or a specialist potato



bag. Alternatively, use an old compost bag. Recommended varieties: 'Charlotte', 'Nicola', 'Anya'.

**Sweet Peppers** Tender sweet peppers need warmth and sunlight. Grow plants in containers in a sheltered, sunny spot outside, or in a greenhouse. Choose compact, early fruiting varieties. How to sow: fill 9cm pots with seed-sowing compost, water well, then place four seeds on the surface of the compost. Sprinkle a light covering of compost over the top and label. Cover with a propagator lid or clear plastic bag held in place with an elastic band to create a mini greenhouse. Place on a sunny windowsill. Remove the plastic bag as soon as seedlings appear. Container size: at least 30cm in diameter. Recommended varieties: 'Marconi Rosso', 'Minibel Orange', 'Mohawk'.



**Tomatoes** are easy and productive in pots. Choose bush, tumbling or cordon cherry varieties rather than large beefsteak tomatoes, which are trickier and mature later in the year. How to sow: fill 9cm pots with seed-sowing compost, water well, then place four seeds on the surface of the compost. Sprinkle a light covering of compost over the top and label. Cover with a propagator lid or clear plastic bag held in place with an elastic band to create a mini greenhouse. Place on a sunny windowsill. Remove the plastic bag as soon as seedlings appear. Container size: dwarf bush and tumbler can be grown in hanging baskets, pots at least 25cm in diameter, or growing bags. Cordons and larger bush varieties need containers at least 30cm wide that will take a stake or support Recommended varieties: 'Totem', 'Sungold', 'Red Alert'.

Source - [www.gardenersworld.com](http://www.gardenersworld.com)

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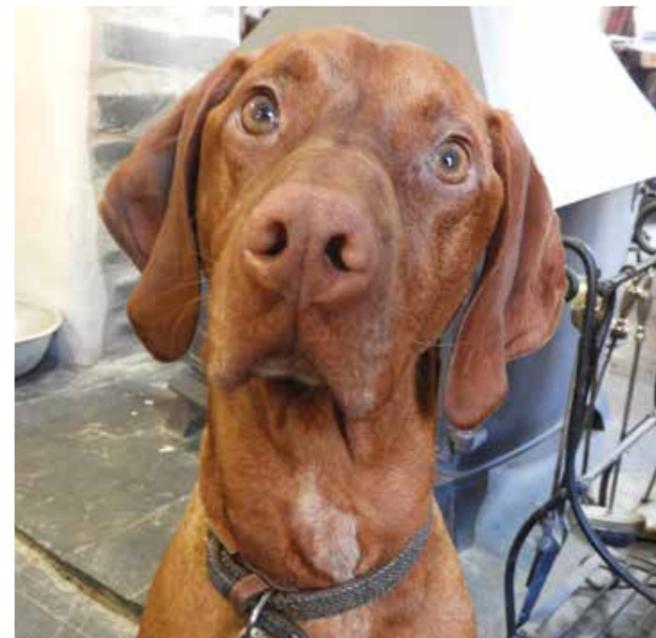
# Look out for Fido

**Have you ever wondered how your dog is so in tune with you? Our dogs generally excel at reading and understanding us humans; they are very well adapted to our human world especially our emotional one.** For example, did you know that dogs, like humans, have a strong left gaze bias when looking at our faces? They look more towards the right side of our face because this is where clues tend to be about how we are feeling.

As humans we are less naturally able to read the body language of our dogs. However you may have done a course on it, read a book, or had a discussion with a dog professional you have employed. The good news is you can learn about your dog's body language particularly when they are showing discomfort/distress. Knowing this is often the key to buffering against behaviour problems within your dog's lifetime.

Let's look at some situations that can worry a dog: hard eye contact, bending over them, angry vocalisations and behaviours, too close contact eg hugging, feeling restrained, being on lead and having an off-lead dog running up to them...

Dogs in any one of these situations may express their concern in a number of ways, some subtle, some less so. Dogs will only learn to escalate their behaviours if the more subtle concerns are ignored, so it is always worth being aware of the subtle signs a dog uses to say "I don't like this, please stop/get me out of here".



Subtle signs of a dog who is feeling stressed about a situation include: licking their lips with no food around (either a full nose lick or a small quick protrusion of the tongue), turning their head away from a stimuli, lifting a front paw and holding it, yawning, dilated pupils, lowered body, panting with a tense tongue, whites of eyes showing (whale eye) and more.

A dog will commit to a full body shake off when trying to discharge some stress they are carrying. For example, after being intruded on by an off-lead dog, an on-lead dog may perform a "shake off" to literally shake the stress away so they can carry on with their walk.

Perhaps take some time to observe the Fido in your life. What stress signals can you spot as your dog goes about his daily life? Did you think your puppy liked being picked up, but now are spotting some stress signals such as a yawn or lip lick when in your arms?

Don't wait for a full behaviour problem to arise before coming to understand your dog. If you have any minor concerns and want to check out your dogs' body language with a behaviour specialist, do send me an email and we can discuss your four-legged family member.

Jen Leslie, Calvert Canines Dog Behaviour Specialist  
calvertcanines@gmail.com

## Answers to Tea Break Quiz on page 13

1. Athletics, 2. A priest, 3. Ankle, 4. Fox, 5. Hair, 6. George VI, 7. Sullivan, 8. A pear, 9. Rudyard Kipling, 10. Wink, 11. The Titanic sank, 12. The Quakers, 13. The Titanic, 14. Elysee, 15. A nelson, 16. Mass, 17. Be prepared, 18. Vatican City, 19. Charles Lindbergh, 20. VAT

# Lockdown activities

**As Spring is thankfully fast approaching and, hopefully by the time you read this more of us have been vaccinated.** I am taking the opportunity to reflect on some of the activities that have kept me busy during the dark, long, lockdown months of December and January some of which I will definitely continue during 2021.



I have always been able to knit thanks to help from my mother during my formative years, but have never been able to crochet. However, I still use a crochet blanket for yoga sessions which my mother made more than 30 years ago. I decided to create a new one for my granddaughter. After trying unsuccessfully to crochet a blanket from the beginning several times, I turned for help to Youtube.

There are many tutorials available but the one I used was called Easy Beginner Granny Square Baby Blanket by Bonnie Barker on BonnieBayCrochet.com. This 25 minute video explains very clearly how to start a blanket, how to turn corners and how to finish with a decorative shell edge. I completed a doll size one and am now in the middle of a larger one.

Italy is a country I have always loved especially the countryside, food and art. I also love the sound of the language. I did start learning Italian some ten years ago and had signed up for adult

learning classes to begin last September which were of course cancelled. So I turned to the computer yet again and signed up to Duolingo. You can download a free App which provides bite-sized lessons. It's very simple and easy to use. They send you reminders to keep you motivated and so far I've completed basic sessions plus modules on food, colours and animals. It will be a long time before I'm fluent but it's a fun way to both learn a language and exercise your brain.

Finally, walking is an activity that most of us have been doing so much of during lockdown. The Waddesdon Greenway is a shared cycling and walking route linking Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station and Waddesdon Manor. This traffic-free trail runs for about 4km (2 miles) along a flat surfaced path which is suitable for walkers, cyclists, scooters and wheelchair users. Most of the time it is dry to use but occasionally after heavy rain it can get a little flooded.

Waddesdon Manor grounds are also open Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 4pm for daytime, outdoor exercise. Local people can exercise in the fresh air, on their own, with their household/bubble or with one person from another household. Visits have to be booked in advance. For more information and for up to date guidance visit [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk).

So, as lockdown continues (but hopefully will eventually end soon), if you see someone out walking in the local vicinity, covered with a newly crocheted blanket, muttering Italian to herself...Reader, it may well be yours truly!

Susan McCabe



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# The Phantom Tree Planter

**The Black Poplar (populus nigra betulifolia) is Britain's rarest native timber tree. The tree can take one hundred years to reach full maturity and was once very common in England and Wales, but only a few thousand now remain nationwide as the tree doesn't easily reproduce naturally.** Roger

Jefcoate has been a passionate promoter of this rare tree for nearly 40 years and has planted hundreds of Black Poplars throughout the country from saplings he has grown himself. This includes plantings in Royal Parks in London and Windsor as well as in Buckingham Palace, Sandringham (with the Queen and Prince Philip), Gatcombe (with the Princess Royal), on the sports ground at Eton and in the grounds at Chequers. He has also planted Black Poplars around Aylesbury and would be happy to plant some in Watermead; he has already planted one at the top of the 'ski slope' in recognition of Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher's 14 years as Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire.

Roger has planted hundreds of Black Poplars, a beautiful tree, all over the country by simply dropping a carefully prepared three-year-old cutting into a crowbar hole. It features on Constable's 'Hay Wain' and also in his paintings of Salisbury Cathedral where Roger replanted the trees which he painted. We have in the UK 50 million oak trees and probably 80 million ash trees but only about 15,000 black poplars are on our national database, and fewer than 1,000 are female, so he plants both male and female. Many are done by what he calls "guerrilla tree planting" in broad daylight, so far never challenged not even when on a roundabout! This led Roger being described as "The Phantom Tree Planter" by the Woodland Trust and in Professor Fiona Stafford's fascinating book "The Long, Long Life of Trees".

Buckinghamshire is well known for its extensive Chiltern beechwoods which for centuries provided fuelwood for London and timber for the furniture industry in Wycombe and were home to the famous woodland bodgers, the craftsmen who produced millions of chairs.

In 1973 Roger and his wife Jean moved to Mursley. They heard on Radio 4 a retired botanist from Kew describe the plight of the black poplar, which according to the Forestry Commission is Britain's most endangered tree. They thought that Edgar Milne-Redhead's description fitted several nearby trees so they sent him samples which he confirmed were genuine, his first record from our area. Later Roger

sent many more local records confirming that Aylesbury Vale has the highest concentration of black poplars in Britain.

Black poplars were often established near farms as pollards to provide light agricultural wood products and animal feed in a dry year, or as open grown trees to provide curved timbers for barns and thatched cottages because the wood will not easily catch fire. It was also used for wagon brake blocks, wagon floors, clogs, thatching spars, sheep hurdles, matches and much else besides.

The black poplar is light hungry and young trees will lean away from nearby mature trees. Most will grow at low elevation, many along rivers and watercourses or near ponds or lakes in isolation or in single rows; they are really trees of open landscape rather than woodland.

There is a lot more to Roger Jefcoate who was born in Amersham and has always lived in Buckinghamshire. He co-founded charities like ME Research UK, Mobility Trust and Canine Partners. His amazing and varied contribution to society started in 1960 when Roger helped to develop the world's first electronic life-support ventilator. He then moved on to Stoke Mandeville Hospital at the invitation of Sir Ludwig Guttmann to develop the first independent-living technology for severely disabled people including ventilator users. He helped to persuade the NHS to provide that possum technology nationwide, including for Stephen Hawking. Soon, though, there were many more pioneering developments by the Stoke Mandeville team that weren't available on the NHS such as finger-controlled road vehicles, mouth operated wheelchairs, writing aids, page turners,

intercom systems and so much more.

Roger didn't want these to be out of reach for those struggling for financial survival on benefits, so he founded the Disability Aid Fund in 1983 to fund this equipment. This became the Roger and Jean Jefcoate Trust which now supports local, regional and small national healthcare charities for older people. They prefer to help adults because BBC Children in Need raises millions of pounds to help young people; what about oldies in need?

Mary Singleton



## Our local Vicar

**It is strange when sitting down to write these newsletters ahead of the publication date during the coronavirus and you don't know what the state of play will be when you the reader is reading this!**

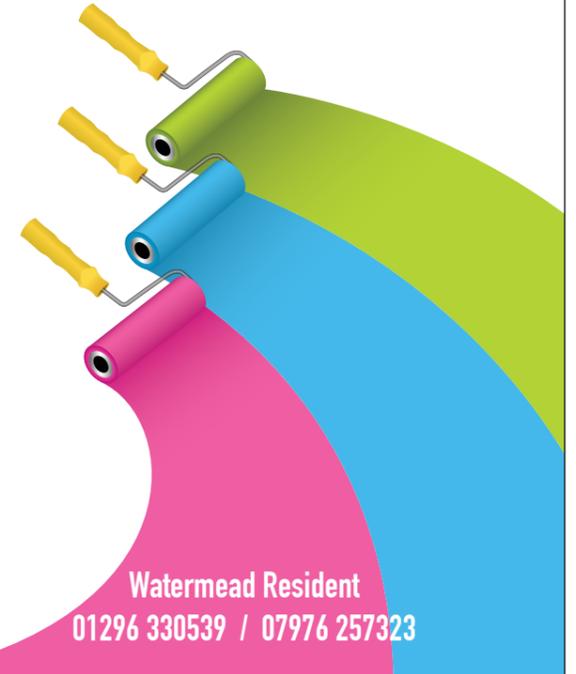
It does seem though that we are heading in the right direction and soon, one day, we will be back to some kind of normality. What that normality will look like, we will have to wait and see. We don't know what devastation will be left behind; we are praying that this will be quickly reversed when everything starts back up again.

I can't wait to get back to normality in the church. I can't wait for people to not have to wear masks and be able to sing and I can't wait to have coffee after the services again. The church has grown in attendance over the last year and many of the new people have started coming to the church when it became a requirement to wear a mask; coffee had been suspended a long time before they even stepped through the door. It is very strange as a Vicar not to be able to see people's faces when you are leading a service and then to catch up with them and get to know them when the service has finished.

This is because we are fundamentally created to be in relationship with each other and part of that is to actually see each other. I am afraid that I might not recognise some of the people outside of the church because I won't recognise them without a mask! Being in relationship is a reflection of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the love and encouragement that is between them is reflected in us. At the moment this is being broken and strained but one day we will be able to see each other and have a coffee. We at St James will be waiting for that day with a lovely cup of coffee and a warm welcome!

Many blessings, Revd. Dan Beesley  
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# Highly recommended staycations

**Regrettably a resolution to the pandemic may not arrive until the latter part of 2021, if then. So for those unsure where to start amongst the multitude of possibilities for a 'staycation' later this year, and to give our readers the benefit of Watermead residents' direct experiences, here are a few holiday destinations recommended based on their recent experiences.**

**Edinburgh/Skye/Edinburgh. Three Days/Two Nights. Timberbush Tours**  
We absolutely loved this! A small friendly coach party hosted by driver Stuart, one of the most knowledgeable and entertaining guides we ever met. A thrilling adventure featuring fascinating cultural insights, historical landmarks and heritage stories!

**Day 1** - outward bound with chilling tales of Scottish feuds and a crash course in Whiskey! Stops included breath-taking beauty spots such as Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor, Glencoe Valley (site of the 1692 massacre of the MacDonald Clan), Ben Nevis (Fort William), Glen Garry and the stunning Five Sisters of Kintail mountain range.

**Day 2** - having booked in for a two night stay at the charming seaside village of Portree on the Isle of Skye, we took in a full day's tour including Kilt Rock, the hot springs at Fairy Pools, where Dot had a quick paddle, and the Old Man of Storr.

**Day 3** - homeward bound with singalongs and more heritage stories! Stops included a quick tour of the much-admired Eilean Donan Castle, backdrop for the movie 'Highlander', before moving on to the pretty loch-side village of Fort Augustus for lunch, followed by a boat trip to see Nessie! The tour continued south over Laggan and the Grampian mountains with a last stop in the Victorian resort town of Pitlochry, before returning to Edinburgh.

**The Wilderness Festival - 5th till 8th August 2021**  
We have been twice before and might go again this year, if possible. Situated in the Oxfordshire Cornbury Park estate, this is one of the most picturesque of all the major festivals, featuring ancient rolling woodlands, lakes and streams. There is so much to do and see, including a huge variety of live music, dance, culture, arts, crafts, alternative medicine and discussion forums. Basic tickets include camping with the masses or if you feel like really treating yourselves, go for the boutique or meadow camping, or bring your own van!

**Center-Parcs Woburn**  
We took a mid-week stay here and liked it very much indeed, having been to all of the

UK Center-Parcs except Nottingham. Best of all it's just down the road! A beautiful mature pine woodland setting, with reasonable gradients for those who prefer brisk exercise rather than the more strenuous challenges at Longleat! As with all Center-Parcs, a great choice of activities and places to eat.

Phil & Dot Toler



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# Death of an English Prince

## 6th November, St James's Palace,

**London** Henry, Prince of Wales (*below*), lies dying. He is eighteen years old. A popular, charismatic and athletic young man, he is the great hope of English people. His brother,



Charles, a pale, weak and undersized 12 year old, adores his elder brother, who is everything he would like to be.

Henry, like his mother, Anne of Denmark, is an art collector and among

his collection is a little bronze horse. Charles takes the little horse to his brother on his deathbed and gently presses it into his hand, hoping it will bring him comfort. Neither doctors, nor prayers, nor comforts, can save Henry. Charles, in whom no one has confidence, becomes the Prince of Wales. King James, their father, is too distraught to attend the funeral and Charles attends alone. The weight of the Kingdom will one day rest on his frail shoulders.

Charles, as King (*below*), becomes a great art collector, but an inept and clumsy king.



In January 1649, his head is severed from his body after he has been found guilty of making war on his people. His art collection, started by his mother and his brother is sold off, sometimes cheaply,

to pay off his debts. England becomes a Commonwealth and, in 1653, a Republic

## Excerpts from the diary of Elizabeth Cheney

### Aylesbury, January, 1642

News came that, after his abortive attempt to arrest five Members of Parliament on 3rd, the King has fled London. This breach of Parliamentary privilege has lost him a good many supporters and who can tell what will happen now? So many people among those he counts on for support have been harmed by his policies, but still, because he is the King, have thus far stood by him. It is doubtful how many will do so, now.

### Aylesbury, July 1642

We hear that our Vicar, Rev John Barton, incumbent of St. Mary's, Aylesbury since 1618, has been arrested and committed

to the Gatehouse for speaking against Parliament. He is lucky not to have had SL for Seditious Libeller, or some such, branded on his cheeks, as happened to William Prynne in 1637, who also had his ears cropped, for writing against the King.

### Aylesbury, August, 1642

The King has raised his standard at Nottingham and we are at war. Not against foreigners, but against one another. It will be father against son, brother against brother and cousin against cousin.

Brother Daniel has declared for the king and we are in despair. He has always despised the King for his religious policies, the ruination of the Church of England to our minds, and his fiscal policies which have all but bankrupted men like my father. Among other things, father had been forced to "lend" the King money he did not have and father is now in more debt.

Our estates bring us a good income, this being a rich farming area, close to the capital, but father has many expenses and four daughters to find dowries for. He is beside himself with worry. Now Buckinghamshire is expected to pay a levy of £1200 per month towards the King's army. Let him try to collect it, says father. With all the farms of the area, he could certainly collect it that way and by other plunderings, unless we stand up for ourselves.

### November 1642

The Royalists, under the King's nephew, Prince Rupert, with his dog, Boy, said to be his familiar, devil incarnate that he is, have raided just north of the town at Holman's Bridge. We were victorious. They gained nothing, losing many men. We, ourselves, sadly lost fifty. However, we have gained in confidence. I pray, that after this and other reverses, since he left London, the King will come to his senses, but when did Charles Stuart ever have sense?

The Earl of Essex, Parliamentary Commander in Chief, has left Thame and is rumoured to be settling at Aylesbury. Aylesbury is going to become a Parliamentary garrison town. The town is crucial. It could block the Royalists' way to London, which they must regain if the King wishes to run the country again. We already have a parliamentary force here, in the shape of Henry Buldtrode's regiment, so it does not surprise us.

But that creates great problems too. Men and their horses need billeting. We and families like us, will have to do the billeting which is a further drain on our resources. Parliament has also placed a levy on the

people of Buckinghamshire, but of much less than the King, but it still has to be paid.

Our family is lucky to have a godly man, a Captain Wenshall, billeted with us. He is a learned man and a good Puritan, so he and my father get on well. I think my sister, Hannah, is rather taken with the captain, for she blushes whenever his name is mentioned.

The Verneys of Claydon are, like ourselves, split. Sir Edmund will not desert the King, despite his dislike of his policies, but his eldest son, Ralph, sides with Parliament. This is the story of many families, I fear. Perhaps, Ralph will go abroad, rather than fight his father, who is the King's standard bearer, but that might mean his lands will be sequestered and his family have nothing. But Ralph is a clever man and will, no doubt, make contingencies.

### April, 1643

Some good news, at last, Captain Wenshall has asked father's permission to marry Hannah. And he has given his blessing. The Captain is of good family, as attested to by our kinsman, John Deturis at Brill, who has known the family for many years. Father says they must wait to be married, as Hannah is so young. She also has much to learn about running the household. I suspect, also, that father is afraid the Captain may be killed or badly injured but, of course, has not said so.



### October, 1642

Sad news. Sir Edmund Verney, who went against his own feelings, to fight for the King, has been killed at the Battle of Edgehill (*above*). His body has not been found, but his hand, clutching the standard has. This war can only bring England and her people to our knees.

### June, 1643

John Hampden, local MP, and one of the five members King Charles tried to arrest in Parliament, has been killed at Chalgrove Field. He has stood against the King for his liberties, having been prosecuted for his attempts to overturn Ship Money, whereby inland areas would be forced to pay for the King's ships. It is another sad loss.

### June, 1645

A messenger arrived today. Brother Daniel has been killed at Naseby fighting for the King. Pray God, brother David, fighting for Parliament, will be safe. My father has locked himself in his library. His is only thankful that our mother did not live to see this day. The New Model Army, under Oliver Cromwell, fought an excellent battle at Naseby and was victorious. The King, having been held hostage by the Scots, after he prevaricated over making the Church of England Presbyterian, is now in the hands of Parliament. Let's hope the negotiations between the two sides restore our nation, so we can lick our wounds and be whole again.



### January, 1649

After his falseness in the negotiations and further war, the King has been tried at Westminster. He is charged with making war against his people. No King has ever been put on trial before and there are questions

as to whether or not it is legal. Sir Thomas Fairfax, lately Commander in Chief of the Parliamentary Army, has washed his hands of the business and retired to his Yorkshire estates. There are rumours that the masked woman who cried out against the proceedings was Sir Thomas's wife, Lady Anne.

### 30 January, 1649

The King has had his head severed from his body (*left below*). A great groan arose from the many onlookers as the deed was done. Some mopped up the King's blood with handkerchiefs, it is said.

England is now a Commonwealth. Never before have we been without a King. His fabulous art collection is being sold off to pay off his debts. Such an extravagant man, on other people's money. One imagines the money will help pay army arrears of pay also. It appears Cromwell has ordered meticulous accounts be kept.

### 1651

The wars are finally over. God be praised. Now a long process of counting the cost.

### September, 1653

We are now a Republic. Oliver Cromwell is our Head of State. It is to be hoped that he will not repeat the errors of the King. (*right - Statue of Cromwell in Market Square, Aylesbury*)

*NOTE: The diary of Elizabeth Cheney is fictional, but the events and issues are not. There are many books written about the English (British) Civil Wars of 1642-51 but if you wish to know more about Buckinghamshire at the time, Prof Ian FW Beckett's Wanton Troopers is recommended. Also The Sale of the Late Kings Goods by Jerry Brotton will throw light on what happened to Charles I's art collection. If you wish to know more about the King's trial, Geoffrey Robertson, QC, The Tyrannicide Brief and Charles Spencer's The Killers of the King make interesting reading.*

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# Sally's Blog



if Father Christmas was actually coming.

I did have an interesting letter from the doggie grandson of a Watermead resident. His name is Scooter and he reads my BLOG. He is a rescue dog who has come from Romania! Although he lives in London, I am hoping that I will be taken to meet him once the pandemic is over.

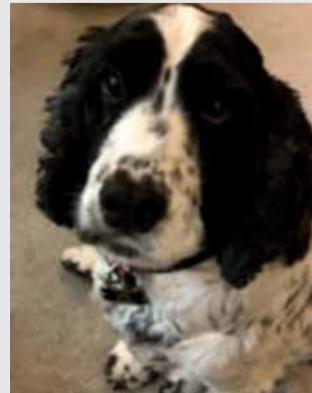
He looks as if he could be a bit of a character, take it from one who knows and does her very best to be as naughty as possible!

I must say it is quite hard to keep cheerful. We go out for our walk every day but lately it's only really been on pavements because the lake paths have been so flooded. I am sure that things will improve soon.

At least we do see lots of friends while we're out, both human and canine so I can always have a chat – unfortunately the humans don't understand my woofing and seem to just get cross because I am too noisy. Apparently they can't think when I bark loudly – excellent, I've been practicing this for ages and now I have a way of getting them to move on with no need to pull on the lead. Talking of leads I had a brilliant tartan

tweed lead from my friends Irina and Adrian at Christmas, it's excellent and I love it. I don't love the new red thermal dog coat I am now forced to wear because the humans think it's so cold. It is cold, but because the groomer is closed I have lots of fur - please don't make me wear a coat..... I am sure other dogs here will understand. I see so many of you wearing coats, it's an epidemic of its own!

Please all keep safe until we meet again. Love Sally x



## Dear Sally,

So nice to hear your news, even though it has not been exciting for you. My "Grandma," a human, lives in Watermead and tells me about you. I am called Scooter and am from Romania; my grandma's daughter rescued me. I now live very happily in England.

Two weeks ago, Grandma's friend lost her dear Golden Retriever, Eppie, who had been very sick. My Grandma's friend was very upset by Eppie's passing, but my grandma and another lady found another Golden Retriever for her. She is called Amber and is now living with Grandma's friend, so here is a happy ending for a change.

Amber will need to be helped to adjust to living in a house as she lived in kennels before. The breeder who owned her decided that three litters was enough and put her up for adoption. In only a week, at time of writing, she has learned to enjoy chasing a ball, loves the pond in the garden and is enjoying one to one attention.

I do hope you get to see your family at Christmas. I enjoy seeing mine and dogs Layla, Pip and Alfie. We are quite a pack when we get together! But this year, perhaps not.

I loved the photographs of the dogs in Village View. Grandma really enjoys the magazine and living in Watermead. My Grandma likes cats, too. Not so sure myself.

Love, and woofs, Scooter.

PS My Grandma helped me write this as my paws are too big to tap the keys on her iPhone.

## Take part in this year's Watermead Photo Competition

Open to all Watermead Residents

Following on from our previous successful events we will be holding another Photo Competition this year. The Exhibition and judging will be on Saturday 18th September.

You can submit up to 2 photos in each of 3 categories:  
**Beautiful Watermead - Landscapes & Wildlife**  
**People & Events\***  
**Open Category - shots of anything you want**

\*Entries in the "People & Events" category can include photos taken before activities were restricted due to Covid-19.

This year we are also opening the first two categories to anyone who enjoys Watermead.

It is not necessary to have an expensive camera - some of the winners in previous years have been photos taken with phones. Get shooting now and save some of your best shots for the competition.

If conditions improve and we are again able to have an exhibition in the Village Hall entries will need to be in print form, otherwise as in 2020 we will call for digital files and the exhibition will be on the Parish Council website.

Further details, including the competition closing date, will be given in the Summer edition of Village View.

## The Big Walk in aid of PACE

This year's Pace BIG Walk routes will be circular taking in part of the Ridgeway Trail and take place on 24 April 2021.

All routes start and finish in Wendover at the John Colet School. There is a choice of 18, 12 or 6 miles or The Superhero Mile routes.

There is something to suit all ages and abilities. This is a great opportunity to set yourself a challenge for 2021 and have some outdoor fun.

By taking part in the BIG Walk, you will not only have the opportunity to explore this beautiful countryside in a completely unique way, but you will also be helping us to provide life changing support to the children and young people who access Pace services.

To sign up visit [www.thepacecentre.enthuse.com/cf/bigwalk2021](http://www.thepacecentre.enthuse.com/cf/bigwalk2021)

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## Watermead Piscatorials

**Watermead Piscatorials are again looking for new members to join them. The club is run by a committee.** You do not need to be experienced, as the existing members are more than able to offer advice and help to any new members.

The club ensures that everyone knows the rules of the lake, here are a few:

- no night fishing
- fishing from the pegs only
- all fish caught must be returned to the lake.

It costs £10 to join the club and then £40 per year. If you want to have a go before committing yourself the Parish Clerk has a one-day ticket to fish.

To find out more contact the Piscatorial Treasurer Don Smith: [don.smith33@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:don.smith33@hotmail.co.uk) or 07790 481232.

## Dear Sally,

Isn't it exciting? We have snow in the Chilterns! I remember snow when I was a puppy in Romania. Didn't like it then as I did not have a nice house to live in and a human mum to take care of me. But it's different, now.

I thought you and your doggy friends would like to know how Amber is getting on living with my grandma's friend in London. She still prefers to be outside and Linda has to coax her in out of the cold. Also, she likes to find things like Linda's husband's slippers and run outside with them. Perhaps she misses her puppies. She now likes to be near Linda when indoors, rather than hiding in the hall or utility room and has started wagging her tail, so it seems she is a lot happier. My mum says it will just take time. She now has a loving home, like me.

We have not seen grandma since before Christmas. I hear her when mum talks to her on the phone and then go to our front door thinking she will come in, but she doesn't. Mum says she misses me.

We have seen one of mum's friends and her dog on mum's days off. They walk us far apart. Humans are strange. Mum says it is because of Covid, whatever that is. On mum's days off, we walked down by the canal in Wendover and a few days ago saw a kingfisher. Mum says it has beautiful bright feathers; can't see it myself. Looked a bit grey in places, as far as I could see. Normally, we walk in the woods next to our house. I have been getting very muddy paws, which I don't like, but I do not like it when mum washes them, either. I have a very thick coat and, one of the good things about not going out is not having to go to the dog groomer. My mum is clipping me now. Much better.

The family is looking forward to the summer. We usually meet up because most of the humans in the family have birthdays in July and we like to be together either at my mum's brother's house in Amersham or else at our house. As we did not get together at Christmas, it will be great fun. I will see all my doggy friends, too.

We watched Country file, a few weeks ago. It was about the Chilterns. Very exciting. The sadness was how the new railway has destroyed so much of our beautiful countryside. No matter how many new trees they plant, it cannot make up for what has been destroyed. My Grandma said she saw that someone had asked if the archaeologists who had excavated along its route, had found any white elephants. A big one!

Must go now as mum has my lead in her hand. Look forward to hearing your blog and hope you and your humans are well. Friendly woofs and wags,

Scooter



# Parish Council Elections

**The Parish Council has sat for an additional two years to allow its future elections to coincide with those of the new Buckinghamshire Council (last year) and with last year's cancelled due to Covid-19.**

Election day for Buckinghamshire Council, Parishes and the Police Commissioner is Thursday 6th May and it is planned these will go ahead, as I write.

It has been my great honour, and that of my colleagues on the council, to represent parishioners and their interests over past years. I would like to personally thank each of them, on your behalf, for their service and hard work on behalf of the community. Each has brought their own skills and areas of interest, producing events, the Village View, undertaking legal work, marketing, interest in wildlife and environment, governance and finance. Their contributions are significant. I would also like to thank the Councillors who have left over the past six years.

If you would like to stand for election please get in touch with Noreen Shardlow, our Parish Clerk, who will have nomination papers available from March. Papers must

be returned to the council offices by the due date in April.

Watermead Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence, giving us the freedom to act, as any individual can, within the law, in a less restricted way, for the benefit of the whole community. We are fortunate in having a qualified Parish Clerk, and we need to maintain the required number of elected parish councillors who must be elected rather than co-opted. The forthcoming changes in local government in Buckinghamshire, and the possibility of further devolved services, increase the scope of activity for the Parish Council. The next few years will make for interesting and challenging times for parishes. The work of councillors includes:

- Attendance at monthly evening parish council meetings, apart from August and December, and a budget meeting during December at which councillors consider the next year's budget requirements. The Parish Precept (the council's income) is set formally at the January parish council meeting when it is debated.
- Considering things such as planning matters, traffic and highways, land

management, grant funding applications, anti-social behaviour, ensuring the right level of provision of waste bins and dog bins, land management, allotments and so on, as well as other projects for the benefit of the community from time to time. A variety of skills are needed.

- Councillors need to make time available for council meetings, and to work on individual projects from time to time. The work is interesting and rewarding, giving councillors a chance to get involved in the community for good and is a great way to meet new people and learn new skills. Training is provided.

Candidates representing all sections of the community are most welcome. A short document explaining the requirements and criteria for standing and a 'person specification' can be obtained from the Parish Clerk. (Contact on 01296 395211). If you are interested, why not get in touch and we can meet and talk about the role in detail.

*Cllr Sue Severn, Chair*

# CALLING ALL COMMUNITY HEROES



# YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL NEEDS YOU! MAKE A CHANGE BECOME A COUNCILLOR

Passionate about our community? Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the Council? Do you have concerns about a specific issue and want to do something about it? People from all backgrounds and experience, who reflect their community are needed to put themselves forward for the election.

To find out more about Watermead Parish Council, and to find out how to stand, please call Noreen Shardlow, Parish Clerk 01296 395211  
[noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk](mailto:noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk)



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# Watermead Christmas Lights

**C**hristmas 2020 was certainly the most wonderful time of the year. The fabulous Christmas lights in Watermead compensated for all the other compromises we have had to make for everyone's safety. In particular, the children were deprived of all the joys of Christmas fairs, rides, concerts and visiting Santa in his Grotto. We would like to thank everyone for making that extra effort this year. The feedback received about the Christmas lights in our village was amazing. It has been impossible to choose one winner; however we listened to your suggestions and nominations and handed no less than eleven well-deserved prizes. Collectively Kestrel Way was remarkable for the continuous string of lights and window displays but **15 Kestrel Way** stood out.

**7 Ayleswater:** This was one of the most commonly nominated properties particularly for the alley of decorated trees.

**3 Mallard Close:** Our first ever winner managed to improve on what we believed to be perfection.

**3 Watermeadow:** Our most consistent display - wonderful lights year after year. We did notice the newly decorated lamp post. We would love to see more like that.

**67 Kestrel Way:** A serene forest scene hidden away in a cul de sac

**4 Waterlily:** What a nice serene scene which has expanded year on year.

**7 Nuthatch:** We feel this was the most detailed and elaborate display.

**11 Willowherb:** What an interesting scene. We were won over by Santa singing from the Watermead Village Carol Concert hymn sheet.

**3 Raven Close:** Year after year the display grows and gets more complicated. Santa managed to escape his sledge and climbs up the chimney this time!

**3 Sparrow Close:** Again, one of our constant "performers". This house was beautifully decorated.

**22 Kingfisher:** As always, some of the most interesting Christmas decorations and light displays.

We would also like to mention:

- **9 Waterlily** where the snowman-faced garage door certainly made many children smile
- The amazing nativity scene in **Kestrel Way** which is, in our opinion, the most symbolic of the spirit of Christmas and what Christmas is all about
- **117 Lark Vale** - we loved the Santa popping out of your chimney
- The fairy garden at **16 Lark Vale**
- The inflatables in **Kingfisher**
- The indoor Snowman window scene in **Kestrel Way**
- The intricate bay window display in **Lark Vale**
- The projected lights at the end of **Puffin Way**

Congratulations to everyone. You certainly made our village brighter and merrier. We have asked people to keep their lights arrangements in situ for longer, if possible, to maintain the uplifting spirit it brings until the end of the lockdown. We are looking forward to seeing what 2021 brings.

Irina Schwab



7 Nuthatch



15 Kestrel Way



3 Mallard Close



11 Willowherb



22 Kingfisher



4 Waterlily



15 Kestrel Way



3 Watermeadow



Lark Vale



4 Kingfisher



3 Sparrow Close



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# Christmas 2020 in Dubai

**As my Christmas trip to Krakow was cancelled by a reputable travel company my son, who works and lives in Dubai, suggested I spend three weeks with him and his family. Flights were booked as was the Covid-19 test (costing £168) and the cat into the cattery. I was unable to settle until I had received my test results. The result was negative, so I was set to go.**

Terminal 2 at Heathrow was chaotic with so many people wanting to get away. By the time I had dropped off my bags and cleared security it was time to go to the gate. No time for breakfast in the lounge or shopping but, once on the plane with a glass of champagne in my hand, life was great.

Even though this was my fourth visit to Dubai, there were still tourist sights to visit such as the gold Frame with its glass walkway across the top and the wetlands just outside the city centre with flamingos who have special food delivered to them in huge bags.

One evening we watched the sunset from the rooftop bar of Hotel V (Five) and later saw the Moon with Mars nearby and Jupiter and Saturn exceptionally close together in the clear sky.

We visited the garden souk on the edge of the desert where there must have been more

than 50 nurseries all selling the same plants - definitely not like our garden centres. All we wanted was a specific plant and some stones but, no, couldn't find what we wanted!

We did normal family things like food shopping at Waitrose and M&S, visiting the vet for the dog's rabies injection, an optician to get my glasses mended, and "tut" shops to get even more Christmas decorations.

On Christmas Day we had the traditional turkey for lunch with all its trimmings and veggies, and an M&S Christmas pudding which I took with me due to its alcohol content. We were in the garden at 26+ degrees. This was followed by the Queen's speech and a Christmas film in the evening.

On Boxing Day we had brunch at one of the big hotels on the beach. The most bizarre thing that day was seeing people having lunch in a carrier suspended from a crane.

Just before I left, we went into the mountains near the border with Oman and watched the sunrise. The adults, neither me nor the grandchildren, went on the longest zip ride in the world which was the reason for the trip. In the evening we went back to the beach to watch a fantastic drone light show.

No, they don't live by the beach but in an expat village with schools, shopping centre,

swimming pool and restaurants.

My Impressions: As Dubai is a Muslim country there was just a nod to Christmas in the malls and Christmas Day and Boxing Day are normal working days, so you need to book holiday time.

Roads have 7 lanes in both directions, appalling driving, going round in circles in the city centre and suburban roads.

Anything and everything including petrol can be delivered to one's home. We ran out of Sellotape, so an email was sent and it arrived within the hour.

Everyone was wearing a mask!

If one went to a restaurant or bar, you took your own car and when ready to return home, a 'phone call was made and a man appeared to drive you and your car back. Cheaper than a taxi. Very good idea but would not work in the UK due to insurance issues.

Didn't want to come home to the cold and lockdown. The A380 aircraft (double decker) was virtually empty, and Heathrow was like a ghost town at 6.30pm on New Year's Eve.

I had a great time and can't wait for my next trip later in the year.

*Sheena Hudson*



At Footsteps Watermead, we have had a great start to the term as we strive to create an environment of fun, learning, and a caring home from home against what we know has been a very difficult backdrop for our families. The children have settled back beautifully and thrown themselves into all the activities on offer. We have reinforced the importance of good hygiene and had a really fun session covering our hands with green glitter and then practising washing our hands properly. These are skills we have always practised and are skills for life!

We have certainly seen some colder weather this January, but that has not stopped us from getting outside in our lovely garden. The early frost gave us a great opportunity to do some mark making, enjoy our outside toys as well as take inspiration for our winter artwork. We are as ever, totally in awe of our children's imaginations. We have created some snowy, wintry scenes complete with spectacular snowmen with sponge printing and sticking. We have been looking at shapes for our numeracy work, so we are also enjoying a huge range of activities exploring them - with puzzles, pictures, printing, building with duplo and looking at where we find them around the classroom and outside.

At Footsteps we love to take a theme for our learning and see just how many ways we can incorporate it into our huge range of activities. As ever our amazing team of staff have come up with a whole host of ways to bring a little colour into our learning. Colour is an incredible topic as there are just so many ways to explore it. Sorting, bricks/building, songs, stories and puzzles have all been part of the colourful mix, as we really have gone through the entire spectrum of fun to be had.

Both inside and out, there are so many colours to be found. Of course a feature colour was white with the snow we had at the beginning of the week and the children loved playing with the coloured hoops outside which looked even more colourful against the snow. We also had lots of games using our colourful parachute - a great way to keep warm too.

As you would expect our arts and crafts played a huge part. We did lots of painting, drawing and we have been exploring what happens when we mix two colours together, as well as making some fabulous coloured spinning wheels.

We have been also looking at emotions and feelings during children's mental health week. We plan to wear our clothes inside out to help make talking about how we feel inside a little easier, as well as getting out in the fresh air for lots of walks as that always makes all of us feel good!

We have just a couple of spaces available. If you would like to be in touch to see if Footsteps Watermead is a great for your family, then please get in touch at 07865 945297 or email us [watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk](mailto:watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk)



## Family of Cavachon puppies move in to Watermead

**If you have walked around Watermead recently, you might have seen a greater number of bouncy puppies.** The reason may possibly be due to Covid-19 and lockdown where people have wanted cuddly companions to keep them company. Adding to this number are four little Cavachon puppies who have been long awaited by their new families and they arrived in August.

In October 2019 a little Cavachon puppy call Misty joined the Smith family in Kestrel Way. She was very small and didn't grow much but her huge cheeky character and loving nature caused her to be loved by many people she met regularly on her walks.

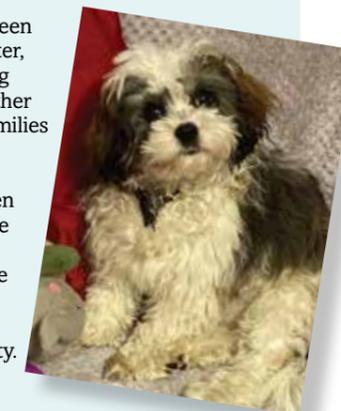
As she was such a character several families decided that they would get a puppy just like her. They went to the same Breeder that Misty came from and put their names down for a puppy from the next litter.

Sadly in July last year Misty ran out into the road and was killed by a passing van. It was a huge shock and we missed Misty terribly - she left a huge hole in our hearts.

Knowing that a new litter had just been born and that there were four in the litter, I managed to get the last puppy looking for a home. She, Misty Moo, and the other puppies came to live with their new families in Watermead.

These puppies now all live in close proximity to each other and can be seen regularly around the village. At the time of writing we have had the puppies for over a month and it is interesting to see the different personalities develop as they grow and learn to be responsible members of the Watermead community. Please say hello to them if you meet them while out walking.

*Lisa Smith*





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Daughter of Buckingham Lodge Resident  
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9.6

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