

# Westcott Village

## Magazine

January 2024



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



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

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

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

Copy deadline for

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**8th January 2024**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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Happy New Year to one and all! I hope Christmas was all you hoped for and that 2024 is a happy, healthy and productive year for everyone. The start of the year can feel like a clean slate and can be very inspiring, but can also possibly seem a bit daunting as you feel you ought to try and change things that could be better. Be kind to yourself and do what makes you feel good.

If you fancy a cultural start to your year, the Dorking Arts Society have a talk on Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, and both ballet and opera screenings are showing at the Dorking Halls (p31).

If you feel the need to exercise the 'little

grey cells' then there is a quiz on page 41 all about January, or you could take part in the Big Garden birdwatch at the end of January for the RSPB from the comfort of your own home.

There are suggestions to help with your New Year's resolutions on page 39, so if you need some guidance you can keep them going past the first week of January and then feel very virtuous at least into February!

The community fridge van is back in Westcott in January, on Tuesday afternoons at 2.45pm at St Johns Chapel, so get along and stop the food from going to landfill.

**Cath**  
**editor@westcottmag.com**



# ...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



## THE COURAGE TO CHANGE OUR MINDS

Amid many of the trends accelerated by social media and set to be turbocharged by the development of AI in the years ahead, I find the development of echo chambers among the most concerning. A recent report by Ofcom showed that social media platforms with their bias-confirming algorithms dominate the top five most popular UK news sources among 16-24s (1). Throughout human history people have been drawn to others who agree with them, and we all probably have our preferred sources of news which may indeed confirm our own perspective. It takes discipline and thought to meaningfully engage with ideas that we disagree with.



It takes genuine courage to come to a realisation that we have changed our mind.

“I AM GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WHO HAVE CHALLENGED MY UNDERSTANDING OF FAITH FROM A PLACE OF TRUSTED RELATIONSHIP – WHETHER ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, MUSLIM OR HINDU...”

This is one of the reasons that I was as surprised as anyone when Ayaan Hirsi Ali, one of the dominant voices in the New Atheist movement alongside Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, wrote an article on UnHerd back in November titled ‘Why I am now a Christian’ (2). Her own journey is quite extraordinary – from radical Islam under the Muslim Brotherhood in Nairobi, onto devout atheism, and now a self-declared Christian. She has faced considerable backlash from a vocal minority of the atheist community – some of whom are quite understandably seeking to understand and disagree with her reasoning, while others are simply looking to undermine her personally to avoid having their world view threatened.

It takes courage to change your mind. It also takes courage to enter into meaningful dialogue and relationship with those that you disagree with on things which are of central importance to your identity.

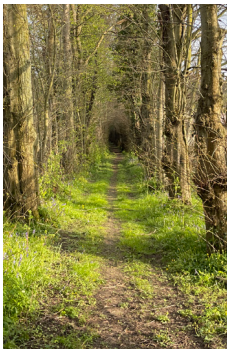
I am always struck by the example of Francis Collins, a brilliant Scientist who was the director of the Human Genome Project before being nominated by Barrak Obama to be the director of the National Institute of Health – a position he held for

# ...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

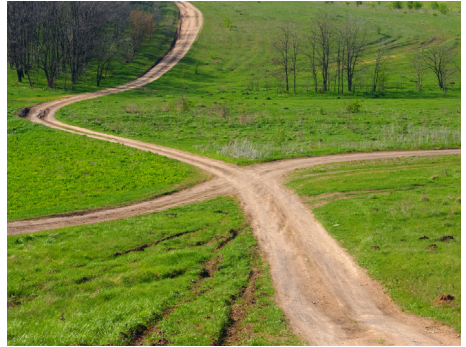
twelve years. His appointment was severely criticised by leading atheists, notably the Harvard Psychologist Stephen Pinker, on the basis that someone who is an active and vocal Christian with "primitive, shamanistic, superstitious" religious views could not be scientifically objective. At the end of Collins' tenure Pinker wrote that he had changed his mind on the basis of the "sheer competence and skill with which he's directed the Institutes" and the fact that Collins could effectively communicate scientific principles to those who were suspicious of the scientific establishment (3).

Collins also struck up an unlikely friendship with the prominent New Atheist

Christopher Hitchens (who described their relationship across the faith divide as "the greatest armed truce in modern times"). Shortly before Hitchens death from cancer, he described Collins both as "one of the greatest living Americans" and that he was one of the most devout believers he had encountered.



Meaningful relationships with 'the other' allow us to engage



and grow. The echo chamber is far more comfortable and convenient for most of us.

I am grateful to the people in my life who have challenged my understanding of faith from a place of trusted relationship – whether Atheist, Agnostic, Muslim or Hindu – I still disagree with them about who God is (or isn't), but they have deepened my understanding of my own faith and what it means for me to live as a Christian and a fully alive Human Being.

- Revd Tim Armstrong

(1) <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand/news-media/news-consumption>

(2) <https://unherd.com/2023/11/why-i-am-now-a-christian/>

(3) <https://www.newyorker.com/news/persons-of-interest/faith-science-and-francis-collins>

# SUNDAY SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY



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

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



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

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

DATE	THEME	8:30AM	10:15AM
7th Jan	New beginnings	Book of Common Prayer Communion	All Age Worship
14th Jan	Galatians: No Other Gospel	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Holy Communion with Sunday Club
21st Jan	Galatians: Faith or Works?	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Holy Communion with Sunday Club
28th Jan	Galatians: Children of God	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Holy Communion with Sunday Club



## MARKING LIFE EVENTS

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

# MIDWEEK PRAYER & WORSHIP

Wednesdays	10am	Communion at St John's
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All are welcome



# Worship nights

First Thursday of the Month  
7:30-8:30pm, Holy Trinity

# THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



Westcott's baby & toddler group

**COOKIE CLUB**

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crafts  
games  
music  
friendship  
fun

parents  
grandparents  
guardians...  
all welcome!

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

The poster features a central yellow circle with the text 'COOKIE CLUB' in large, bold, red letters. Above the circle, the text 'Westcott's baby & toddler group' is written in a blue, curved font. To the left of the circle, a list of activities is written in red: 'snacks', 'crafts', 'games', 'music', 'friendship', and 'fun'. To the right, the text 'parents grandparents guardians... all welcome!' is written in red. Below the circle, the location and time are listed in blue: 'St John's Hall, Westcott', '9-11am every Thursday during term time', and '£2 voluntary donation'. At the bottom of the poster, there is a row of colorful illustrations of children playing with toys like blocks and a toy car.

## MEET YOUR VICAR

**Wednesday 17th January, 8-9pm**  
**Prince of Wales Pub**

Rev Tim will be having a pint in the Prince of Wales from 8-9pm on Wednesday 17th January. If you have yet to have the chance to chat, or want to talk to him about weddings, funerals, football, the meaning of life, or just about anything else...drop in and say hello.





# THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

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

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

**Holy Trinity Pastoral Assistants:** Mark Shakespeare (01306 888010), Ali Mabley (01306 889641)

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

## FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

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### Death:

13th October 2023

Margaret Whitley (95)



## FLOODLIGHTING

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Many thanks to Yasmin and Freddie George, who have sponsored January's floodlighting in memory of their son Freddie (Little Freddie) and their Grandpa Freddie Harry George, who passed away in the summer of 2018 aged 98.

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

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[www.homeinstead.co.uk/epsom-mole-valley](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/epsom-mole-valley)



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## Attune Reflexology Dorking

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Welcome to 2024, a new year full of possibilities and new adventures.



We rounded off 2023 in Westcott with some lovely community events ranging from the Westfestivity Christmas Fair which saw both the village hall and the church full of life, to Green Westcott Community Garden's "Mistletoe & Rhyme" evening at St Johns early in December and the singing of Christmas Carols



around the Christmas Tree on the village green a few days before Christmas. All these events were a great reminder of what a thriving and welcoming community we live in – thank you to everyone who gave their time to organise them.

The WVA Open Meeting at the beginning of December was another welcome opportunity to gather and

discuss village news. We were pleased to welcome Jacky Fryson the new Executive Head Teacher of our lovely village school, Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School and also Nancy Lund from Green Westcott Community Garden both of whom spoke passionately about engaging with the village and being part of the community.

The main focus of the meeting was an update from the WVA's own James Leaver on planning matters. This focused largely on the bitterly disappointing news that despite well organised and strong objections from the community and the WVA, the Planning Inspector appointed to hear the Public Inquiry in to the Sondes Place Farm Planning Appeal, has allowed the appeal thus overturning the decision made by MVDC to refuse the outline planning permission. This now paves the way for development on this Green Belt land.

Whilst the Inspector acknowledged the potential harm to the Green Belt he weighed the lack of housing delivery in the district and the consequential shortfall in affordable housing provision so significantly



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that he deemed the development permissible. He was evaluating the proposals against the existing, rather than the emerging Local Plan, which MVDC paused a year ago citing the Government review of The National Planning Policy Framework. The pausing of the emerging Local Plan is significant as it informs whether potential development sites within the Green Belt are in or out of the Local Plan. The WVA will continue to push MVDC for action on the Local Plan. With regard to Sondes Place Farm, our attention will now turn to influencing MVDC to ensure strong mitigations are in place for the impact on local infrastructure, in particular traffic, as a result of the development.

## Changes to the WVA team

After five years as part of the WVA team, Edwin Harland, has signalled his intention to stand down as our Treasurer at the AGM in June and so we are looking for a new Treasurer to come and join us. It would be ideal if someone could step forward in the



next couple of months so they can shadow Edwin through the year-end report and accounts process which isn't onerous but obviously requires great diligence. So if one of your New Year's resolutions was to get involved in something new and make a difference to the community you live in, this is an ideal opportunity and we would love to hear from you.

Staying with change, the Good Shepherd Trust who are the Admissions Authority for Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School are currently



C of E Primary School

consulting on a change to the 2025/6 admissions policy for the village school. The consultation runs until the 10th January 2024 and should you wish to comment further details can be found on the school website [www.surreyhillsprimarieschool.org.uk](http://www.surreyhillsprimarieschool.org.uk)

As always, if you would like to get involved in a specific project with the WVA or better still, come and join our committee in any capacity, please do get in touch.

**Westcott Village Association Committee**  
**[contact@westcottvillage.com](mailto:contact@westcottvillage.com)**



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# WESTCOTT VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

at  
The Village Hall

As we will not be meeting in January,  
please come and join us on

**Wednesday 7th February 2024**

*Jigsaw and Book exchange*  
*Sandra's cakes & scones*



**10.30am - 12.00 midday**

**Wishing everyone a very  
Happy New Year**





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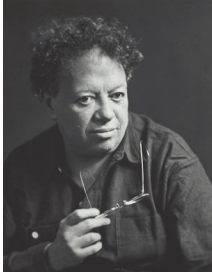


## CHEAP HARDWOOD LOGS FOR SALE

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## Tuesday 9th January 2024 Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera



Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera are two of Mexico's most iconic artists: famous for their work, for their turbulent life together and for the politics that their art reflected. The lecture examines the life and work of both artists - Rivera's intricate visual narratives and Kahlo's own



story in which she frequently made herself the theme of her art.

The talk will take place in the Martineau Hall, Dorking Halls at 10:30am with coffee available from 9:30am. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £7.50. Seating is limited, so please contact Sue Box on 01737 223932 [sue.bax@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.bax@btinternet.com) to book.

Our Society meets on the second Tuesday of the month and we welcome new members.

Please visit our website for more information and details of our forthcoming programme <http://www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk>.



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# WESTCOTT VILLAGE HALL UPDATE



Just over 200 people attended the public consultation event in November and in excess of 250 completed a questionnaire. Our advisers have commented that they cannot recall a consultation with such strong participation and positive contribution. Thank you for your part in this.



The overwhelming message is that 95% of respondents were in favour of re-providing a community building which provides broad support for this project. We have clarity from this consultation on the overall preferences but it would be inappropriate for us to confirm these, or commit further expense, until we have had the opportunity to test these in a pre-application meeting with Mole Valley Council. This meeting is now being arranged.

Aside from more specific neighbour comments, key comments which we have noted as a priority for our on-going work include:-

1. Furlong Road - managing the potential loss of some on street parking on Furlong Road and addressing

congestion concerns.

2. Size of the community building - to be no smaller than the existing hall and preferably larger, to consider an upper level and to maximise parking.

3. Regarding the residential element of this project - smaller houses are preferred.

4. Sustainability - to ensure that the new community building is adaptable, robust, low maintenance, has modern eco credentials and provides a lasting positive impact for the community.

5. Business Plan - reassurance that the trustees can present a business plan which supports the on-going operation of the hall going forward.

We will provide further updates to you by email and via the usual village news channels as we move the project towards a planning application in 2024.

Further comments are welcome to [info@westcottvillagehall.com](mailto:info@westcottvillagehall.com). And if you believe that you have a specific skill or contribution you would like to offer to the trustees, we would be delighted to hear from you!

With kind regards.

**Westcott Village Hall Trustees**



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**MID SURREY**  
COMMUNITY FRIDGES

The Mid Surrey Community Fridge van now visits Westcott  
**every Tuesday opening at 2:45pm**

It stays in the village for up to half an hour from opening at  
**St John's Chapel in Chapel Lane**

Many come early to queue and chat –  
it's a good catch up!

Please come along and stop this food going to landfill

If you can make a small donation, it would be appreciated  
Mid Surrey Community Fridge  
relies upon these donations  
(£2.50 is suggested)

Bring your shopping bags,  
bring your friends,  
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The advertisement features a collage of three fence styles: a dark wood fence on the left, a light wood lattice fence in the center, and a white vinyl fence on the right. Below the collage is the RBFencing logo, which consists of the letters 'RBF' in a bold, white, sans-serif font inside a dark oval, with the word 'FENCING' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The background of the advertisement is a gradient of olive green and white.

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## Save the dates – just one hour – on 26th to 28th January 2024

Big Garden Birdwatch is the UK's largest garden wildlife survey. It's been running since 1979, and every year, around 700,000 people take part. It takes place over the last weekend in January each year. In 2024, Big Garden Birdwatch will be back on the 26th-28th January. If you are interested in getting involved you can sign up and register with the RSPB from mid December 2023.



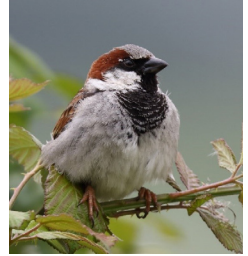
On the weekend of the Big Garden Birdwatch itself, taking part is really

easy. You just spend an hour watching the birds in your garden, from your balcony or in your local park, and record what you've seen. If you see very few birds or none at all, that's also really useful information for the RSPB, so please do let them know.

Big Garden Birdwatch is important citizen science. It provides a vital snapshot of how the UK's garden birds are doing. This gives a good impression of the birds that are doing well, and the ones that are struggling. As the first Birdwatch took place more than 40 years ago, the RSPB now have a wealth of data to look

back on.

The UK has lost 38 million birds in the last 50 years, so it's crucial we do all we can to look after our bird life.



Big Garden Birdwatch helps to monitor how garden birds are getting on. Also, people taking part in Big Garden Birdwatch for the first time often find it sparks their interest in nature, especially in children. And then we hope they'll start giving nature a helping hand through feeding their garden birds, putting up nestboxes and gardening in a wildlife-friendly way – actions that can make all the difference to nature.

So how do you take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch? Visit the RSPB website for full info and instructions: [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)

RSPB Dorking and District Local Group covers the local area (including Dorking, Leatherhead, Bookham, Epsom and Ewell). We offer regular walks, both at weekends and midweek and meetings in person and online to provide the chance to learn more in a friendly way.

Check out our activities on Facebook @ "RSPB Dorking and District" or our website <https://www2.rspb.org.uk/groups/dorkinganddistrict/>

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# WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP

## 60 Years of Surrey Hills Society by Ken Bare



On Tuesday 14th November Ken Bare, a Warden of the Society, gave us a lecture on the changing nature of the

countryside in Surrey over the last six or seven decades since 1950. Generally known as an AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - a national review of designated landscapes in 2021 has recommended that such areas be better named as a National Landscape, to better reflect their national importance and elevate them alongside National Parks. The first area to adopt the new branding was the Cotswold Conservation Board.

The role of the Society is to focus on issues related to climate change, biodiversity and sustainability in its National Landscape, and to foster collaboration and action to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Surrey Hills for future generations. A Surrey Hills Symposium is held once a year to bring together experts on the relevant issues, conservation groups and businesses such as farming and others using the woodlands in order to identify issues and develop guidance on the management of the area.

Surrey is the most wooded county in England with some 22.4% covered in woodland. Over the centuries woodland trees have provided the means of building houses, of making numerous farming wagons, carriages and implements including domestic tools, of providing charcoal for various purposes including iron smelting, glass works and gunpowder and to provide the Navy with ships, vital for a mercantile nation. The nobility made use of woodland to encourage the development of wildlife, both birds and animals, which could be hunted.



While a lot of these practical uses have declined, many woodland areas provide areas of beauty and a place for leisure in our modern world. Around the Leith Hill slopes the practice of coppicing to make charcoal is still prevalent.



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## WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP (cont.)



Pollarding used to be a common way of controlling the excessive growth of trees along roads and driveways, but this practice is much neglected nowadays. However, around the roads of Westcott the annual care of hedges, especially on the A25, is very good (with a few notable exceptions), particularly beside the village green and at the bottom of Westcott Street.

In Surrey the well known woods of Abinger Roughs, Polesden Lacey, Staffhurst Wood near Oxted and the slopes of Leith Hill have a mix of broad-leaved trees including oak, birch, beech, chestnut, hornbeam and ash which provide a glorious colour in autumn. A notable place to visit is Langley Vale WWI Centenary Wood near Epsom.



*Spreading fertiliser at Milford c. 1955*

Probably the most visible changes over the years have been the reduction of cultivated farmland and the change in farming of animals. In earlier years fields were ploughed

with horses and harvested by horses and men into sheaves and stacks. The villages were populated by farm workers. On the farms, pigs and poultry were a common sight. There were still blacksmiths in most villages to service the shoeing of horses and repair of ironwork. As the use of horses declined many blacksmiths adopted different trades, including repair of automobiles. Happily we still see pasture fields with 'saddle back' cattle grazing in them.



*Conservation grazing on heathland*

Many areas which used to be covered in heathland, such as Headley Heath and the slopes of Leith Hill have been planted with trees. It is Surrey County Council's ambition to be a carbon neutral county by 2050. Their Climate Change Strategy is to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million new trees by 2030. There is a good deal of science involved in large scale tree planting. The role of multiple mycorrhizal interactions across a woodland is vital in helping to transfer

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Leith Hill after the storm

water, nitrogen and carbon in a large underground system. In return the tree provides sugar from photosynthesis through its leaves.

The type of soil and the natural woodland floor play an important part in the growth of trees. We see plantations of pines which are harvested for wood pulp to make paper, but these are short term commercial projects in a woodland timeframe.

In the last 10 years we have seen the removal of many pylons to improve the outlook in woodland areas. The



Reigate to Guildford railway line was served by steam engine trains until 1965 and these have now been replaced by diesel motor engines although we still see a steam engine train on the line below Ranmore Common from time to time. Villages in the county, such as Shere, have been encouraged by the Surrey County Council to give their centres a special identity.

Our next talk is on Tuesday 9th January with the subject 'The trouble with bees' - a review



of the importance of bees, some beekeeping facts and the threats honey bees face at our usual venue in St Johns Hall at 8pm. There is no talk scheduled for February and the following event after that will be a talk by Rachel Oxberry about the Kent, Sussex and Surrey Air ambulance Service on Tuesday 12th March.

The WLHG committee welcome suggestions for talks and speakers and can be contacted at email: [Westcottlocalhistory@gmail.com](mailto:Westcottlocalhistory@gmail.com). Local information is available on our website: [www.westcottlocalhistory.org](http://www.westcottlocalhistory.org)

**Roger Christian**

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## MUSIC IN DORKING



13th at 7.30, violin and piano recital at Dorking Halls, £21, 01306 740619

21st at 2.00, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, £19, 01306 881717

24th at 6.45, opera screening at Dorking Halls, £19, 01306 881717

The Dorking Concertgoers Society begins the new year with a concert given by two outstandingly talented local musicians – violinist Oscar Perks and pianist Ayaka Shigeno. Both are former pupils of the Yehudi Menuhin School and both now have successful careers as soloists and chamber musicians. Their programme includes three violin sonatas, by Leclair, Beethoven and Fauré, and Ayaka will also play some of the colourful pieces from Albeniz's great Spanish collection *Iberia*.

There are two screenings at the Dorking Halls this month: The classic ballet *Giselle* is performed by the Dutch National Ballet. With music by Adolphe Adam, it tells the story of a young peasant girl who falls in love with a deceitful nobleman. Dvořák's operatic masterpiece *Rusalka* is screened in a recording from the Royal Opera House. This delightful fairytale opera contains some of Dvořák's finest music, including the beautiful *Song to the moon*.

Ian Codd

### Westcott Poppy Appeal Fundraising

As the Poppy Appeal co-ordinator for Westcott I am pleased to tell you that Westcott raised £539.42 for the Royal British Legion this month.



Every penny really does make a difference, so thank you for supporting this amazing charity once again.

Ashley Dickenson



# WEST festivity



Sat 18 November



## Thank you for coming to the Westcott Christmas Fair!

Charity Fundraising totalled over £1,200 to be split between the WESTfest charities, and the Village Hall Development fund.

Huge thanks to all our stallholders, volunteers, prize donors, sponsors, performers, Church, and the WVH Trustees.

WESTfest will be back on June 23rd 2024  
[westfestsurrey@gmail.com](mailto:westfestsurrey@gmail.com)



## Westfestivity Portraits

These festive pictures were taken at Westfestivity by James Croft and demonstrate how much fun was had during the day by all who visited! See if you can spot yourself here.



In the run up to our Christmas festivities, we were thankful for such a wonderful half term of learning, full of our values of love and believe. I am sure you will join me in a special thank you to all our staff who work tirelessly to ensure the best education for each and every child. I would like to also thank all the children for the incredible effort and hard work they have put in, and their efforts are paying off with great outcomes already.

The quality of discussions in every classroom and the 'buzz' which flows from Bees all the way to Otters is fabulous. We are all privileged to be working with your children and visitors in our Open Day tours have remarked on the incredible learning behaviours as well as the polite and friendly welcome received from all.

I would like to say a huge personal thank you to F@SH, our volunteers, our local committee, and everyone who helped with so many enrichment activities throughout the term, from art workshops to discos; life at Surrey Hills is truly full of joy. Without F@SH and everybody who gives of their time, efforts and energy, the school would not be as vibrant and exciting as it is. Enjoy a peek into our daily learning in the pages ahead.

**Jacky Fyson**  
**Executive Headteacher**

## Bees - Pilot Visit

Courtesy of Mr Forrer, Bees took off on a flight to Pirate Island, just off the coast of Africa!

Pre-flight check walking around the plane



Looking for air space to fly the plane safely



Explaining all the controls in the cockpit

Helping to fly the plane



## Butterflies - The Three Little Pigs



Butterflies have been learning about uses of everyday materials. We

built houses for the Three Little Pigs and thought about ways to make the walls windproof and



the roof waterproof. Then, on a very stormy Forest School Wednesday, we tested out different materials to make shelters.

*'We used plastic and held it up to keep dry but we got wet because there were holes in it! It was really good fun'*  
Abby

## Hedgehogs - A Special Visitor for Hedgehogs



This month, Hedgehogs had a very special visitor from Antarctica. Richard Eyre,

the British mentor for Prince Harry's *Walking With the Wounded* expedition to Antarctica in 2012, came into tell us all about his trip. Hedgehogs asked some brilliant questions and have now been filled with curiosity to want to explore the world. He told us how he was in Antarctica for around a month and what he had to do to survive. We found out what he ate, what the South Pole was like and where he went to the toilet! We were even very lucky to even try on some of his clothes that he took to Antarctica with him!



## Rabbits - Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

We have had a fantastic time in Rabbits, doing lots of exciting work all about Charlie and the Chocolate



Factory. The children have loved reading the book and creating their own ending of the story. They also

all thoroughly enjoyed our WOW day of designing, making and eating their own chocolate!



They have also been busy learning all of their times tables and division facts in maths and learning all about electricity in Science. We enjoyed making our own torches in DT!

## Year 5/6 Girls' Football Tournament

A huge well done to our Year 5/6 Surrey Hills girls' football team, who came 1st at the Dorking Football



Tournament. We are all very proud of you.

## THE TIMES - LETTER OF THE YEAR?

---

A 98 year old lady wrote this letter to her bank. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published in The Times. I thought it might inspire our readers to even further heights!

Dear Sir

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month. By my calculations, three 'nanoseconds' must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Pension, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account £30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways.

I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, re-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become. From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate.



Be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope.

Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative. Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Solicitor, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income,

## THE TIMES - LETTER OF THE YEAR?

---

debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof. In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

- 1-- To make an appointment to see me.
- 2-- To query a missing payment.
- 3-- To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
- 4-- To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
- 5-- To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
- 6-- To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
- 7-- To leave a message on my computer. A password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact.
- 8-- To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through 8
- 9-- To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.



May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year.

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# NEW YEAR, FRESH START?



Many of us start the New Year with fresh resolutions and good intentions. They don't tend to last. In fact, research shows that the average resolution lasts a little over 3 months and that only around 6% of people are still sticking with

change one year later. The most common resolutions revolve around physical & mental health, diet & exercise, and finances. The New Year can be a powerful launch point for change but all too often our disappointment at failing to change only reinforces existing habits. This year, consider these tips, all backed by research into what makes change stick.

# 2024

- 1. Start with why** – why are you doing this? Who for? How does it support a greater purpose? How does it align to your values? Write it down and plan change
- 2. Socialise change** – commit to others the changes you will make and enrol them as part of your change team. This commits you to change
- 3. Work with your emotions** – pride, compassion and gratitude all increase connection to the future and help changes stick
- 4. Willpower is finite** – do the tough stuff earlier in the day
- 5. Incentivise it** – Build a reward at each milestone you reach, a point of celebration
- 6. Be kind to yourself** – it's not all or nothing, if you stumble, dust yourself off and go again. Treat yourself as you would treat a good friend
- 7. Focus on a positive future** – Make your resolutions 'dos', not 'don'ts', creating positive pathways in your mind
- 8. Schedule in activity** - book classes, plan meals, allocate finances, make your changes into new habits, routines and rituals
- 9. Think HALT** (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) – in your moments of temptation check whether HALT is in play and address each factor healthily
- 10. Start now!** – don't wait for the 'perfect' moment, it rarely shows up!

Be patient with yourself and others in making change. Habits take around nine weeks to form, so don't expect miracles overnight! Even small changes make a big difference over time. Don't be afraid to ask for help, from friends, family or support professionals. Sign up to a gym, take a course, join a group. Make it regular, make it fun, celebrate each positive step and remember, we're all works in progress! Good luck!

**Gareth Cornwall, CBT psychotherapist**



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## January Quiz Questions



1. January is named after which god, and what is he the god of?
2. January 20th is the national day of which animal?
3. According to folklore a favourable January brings what?
4. January 31st was added to the month by whom?
5. January 29th is national day of which pastime?
6. Which London railway station opened on 11th January 1864?
7. January's full moon is named after which animal?
8. According to folklore a January fog brings what?
9. January 10th is the national appreciation day of what?
10. The BBC began broadcasting in January of what year?
11. Who, on New Year's Day 1985, made the first mobile phone call in the UK?
12. Which Frenchman born on New Year's Day 1863 went on to become the founder of the modern Olympic Games?
13. On the 17th January in which year did Captain Robert Falcon Scott reach the South Pole?
14. True or False? All racehorses become one year older on January 1st.
15. What year did the London Underground open on 10th January?

For answers see page 57

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## DORKING MUSEUM

The team at Dorking Museum wishes all the best for 2024 to all readers and to the supporters and friends of the Museum. The Museum will reopen after the break on 4th January 2024.

**Last chance to see:** *Hedgerow Heritage Exhibition.*

The Museum is hosting an exhibition in conjunction with the Surrey Wildlife Trust's Hedgerow Heritage Project, an ambitious 4-year project aiming to restore and protect hedgerows across the North Downs. There has been a serious decline in the number and condition of these essential habitats with their cultural, environmental and historic value. The exhibition explores the history and heritage of the area's hedgerows,



their importance to the environment and community, and how they might be restored and renewed for the future.

**New exhibition:** *A Call to Arms: The History of the Surrey Yeomanry.*

The first new temporary exhibition of 2024 opens on January 18th and follows the history of the Surrey Yeomanry from its original formation as a voluntary unit in 1794 during the war against Revolutionary France. Having been disbanded at least twice during the early 19th century, it was revived in 1900 at the time of the Boer War, being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Cubitt. It was based in Dorking during the First World War, when many of its members served in India and the Middle East. The exhibition includes two historic uniform





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## DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)



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free family activities in conjunction with Dorking Library. The themes are still to be confirmed – please check the Museum's website or posters for details.

### Great Pterosaur Flying Challenge:

This will be our first Family Activity of the year. Pterosaurs were the flying reptiles that terrorised the prehistoric skies while the dinosaurs ruled the land. You can see their fossil wing bones at Dorking Museum. Families are invited to create and colour their own flying pterosaur models from an assortment of paper and card. All materials provided free, thanks to the generous support of the Art Society, Dorking. This takes place at the Museum on Saturday 20th January, 10am-2pm.



**Family Activities at Dorking Library:**  
The Museum is also continuing monthly

### Get involved:

The Museum is run entirely by volunteers – the team was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 – but is still looking for new recruits who can spare a few hours a month to contribute to this important community resource. This could be at the front desk or in a range of other roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. Current vacancies include a window display organiser for the Museum's new 'shop' window, assistance with ad hoc school and youth visits, a shop manager, an event organiser, a curator of artefacts and guides for the Betchworth Castle, Pub or Deepdene Trail guided walks. See [dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities](http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities) for further details and an application form.

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

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We can't possibly start the New Year without telling you all about the wonderful things we got to experience at the end of the 'old' year! So on a frosty Friday evening at the hall we got comfy and cosy and watched an all time favourite 'Frozen' surrounded by family and friends. What a treat!



As you can imagine Christmas is the perfect excuse for a crazy crafting session! We created a beautiful handprint card for our community to enjoy and delivered it to the church for all to write messages in. We made paper snowflakes, sparkly trees and shiny stars to take home and helped to decorate the nursery tree.

Our cooking also welcomed a Christmassy theme as we baked delicious mince pies and boiled sweet cookies. Many of the cookies did not last the journey home!

On the last day of term we held our carefully practiced for Nativity in St James's Church. Many tea towelled heads, fluffy sheep and tinselled angels sung superbly - entertaining parents, grandparents and the St James' regulars. Joseph and Mary made it safely to the warmth of the Innkeeper's stable just in time!

This wonderful performance was rewarded with a little party and a visit from Father Christmas who said that we were all on his nice list! Phew!

If you have a child looking to start Nursery please don't hesitate to get in touch. Please call 07842 978823 or email [abingercommonnursery@gmail.com](mailto:abingercommonnursery@gmail.com) We can't wait to show you around!

**Kate Fairbrass**

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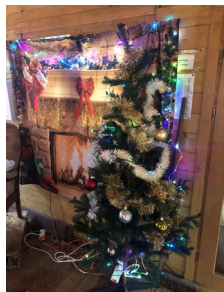
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For our Christmas event on December 5th we had a fantastic turn out. The woodland was looking quite magical thanks

to the hard work of our Trustees and other helpers who made a huge effort to make the Visitors Centre and woodland look very festive.

The families who came with their children enjoyed hot drinks including mulled wine and homemade soup while the BBQ was very popular with burgers and sausages on the go. The Grand Christmas Raffle was extremely well supported and the (mostly donated) prizes were outstanding. Similarly the Craft stall full of festive items was popular and of course the Lucky Dip and games for the children went down really well.



After the treasure hunt which I own up to having put together, was enthusiastically completed by the children, they all received goody bags for completing it successfully. Father Christmas arrived just after 2pm to take his place in the grotto which

was located in the Visitors Centre. Every child received a present from Father Christmas and they all went home happy.

I know a lot of local families came this year which is great and I would like to thank them for supporting our Charity. All proceeds from the day go towards assisting those Veterans who are in difficulty.

So now we go into a New Year, 2024 and it will be a special one for QRMW because on 1st June it will be precisely 10 years since the Memorial Woodland officially opened. So we will be planning a big celebration on Saturday 1st June to which EVERYONE is invited.

Before that we will be holding our extremely popular Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday 24th March at 12.30. Children do need to be registered in advance so that we know numbers for the Egg Hunt. Please contact Debbie on [Debbiehornblow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Debbiehornblow@yahoo.co.uk) to register. The cost is £7 per child. A poster will be in the next issue of this magazine but you can register the children from now, as numbers are limited.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Memorial Woodland soon.

**Paul Cooling, Chairman, QRMW**  
**Registered Charity No 1174651**

# Westcott 100 Club

Happy New Year to you all! The Westcott 100 Club held its 33rd quarterly and 9th annual draws in Holy Trinity Church at the excellent D&G and Surrey Hills School concert on 7th December. The quarterly winning numbers are 12 (£111.25) and 62 (£55.63), and the annual draw winner is 96 (£225.50).

Since our first draw in December 2015, we have awarded nearly £8,000 in prizes and donated over £10,000 in grants to good causes in the village. In 2023 we awarded £500 to support the school's open day, £250 for the D&G and school concert and £150 towards the village Christmas tree. We have further funds available for the next round of applications. It's open to any Westcott club, society or individual – just give us a shout and we'll be happy to have a discussion with you.

For more information on joining the scheme or for the process for applying for funds from the scheme, please email us at [westcott.100.club@gmail.com](mailto:westcott.100.club@gmail.com).

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

*Alda Andreotti (Chair),  
Edwin Harland (Treasurer),  
Richard Packer (Secretary)*

*The Westcott 100 Club is a Small Society Lottery registered with Mole Valley DC no. 48965.*

## Dorking Local History Group

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

- **Post Medieval Iron Factory in the Weald:**

A live talk by Jeremy Hodgkinson on an industry that was vital to the Weald's economy before 1800, and why it declined sharply around that time, Monday 8th January at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.



- **Guildford's Lost Shops:** A nostalgia-packed Zoom talk by David Rose, Monday 22nd January: <https://www.meet-up.com/Surrey-History-Meetup/>.

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

## Lost and Found

**Found** - a striking silver ring with inset stones on St John's Road at the end of November. If this is yours please email [editor@westcottmag.com](mailto:editor@westcottmag.com) and describe it fully to me and then I will put you in touch with the person who found it in order to return it to you.



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## GREEN WESTCOTT

### Let us be the ARK

This winter I have been reading *We are the ARK* by Mary Reynolds - a call to action, to return our gardens to their true nature, via Acts of Restorative Kindness (ARK). The idea grew out of the author's increasing awareness of the collapse of biodiversity and the lack of safe space for wildlife.

Wildlife, in particular insects, have been declining in numbers over the past decades. Many of us are aware of this as we will have observed the lack of splattered insects on our car windscreens, compared to that in our youth.



based on the 'windscreen phenomenon'. People all around the country take part in an annual survey, using a 'splatometer' grid to record the number of insects squashed on their car registration plate. This mirrors a similar survey conducted by the

RSPB in 2004. The results have revealed a 50% reduction of insects in Kent over the last 20 years.

This is not an issue restricted to the UK. A study in Europe showed a 75% decline in insect biomass in protected areas over recent decades. This devastating scale of loss should be of huge concern to us all – insects are an essential part of our interdependent web of life! *"Insects are the food that make all the birds and make all the fish,"* says David Wagner, an entomologist and university professor. *"They're the fabric tethering together every freshwater and terrestrial ecosystem across the planet."*

For the past few years Kent Wildlife Trust, together with Buglife, have been running a citizen science project

The web of life thrives on diversity and each species has its role to play. Insects play a vital role in pollination and soil health. With their decline, our environment falls into disarray and our food system will be severely affected. Three quarters of leading global food crops rely to some extent on animal pollination. Put simply - less pollinators, less food.

### So what can we do to help reverse this decline?

Two of the main causes of insect loss in the UK are habitat loss and pesticide use. While industrialised agriculture is responsible for much of this, our gardens can be hostile places for



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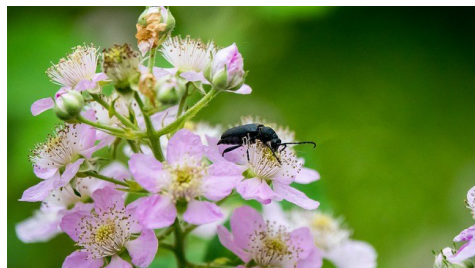
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## GREEN WESTCOTT

insects too. We must now do all we can to bring ourselves back into right relationship with the rest of the web of life, upon which we depend to survive. We can each play a role in supporting life to thrive and we can start right where we are!



### Co-create an ARK

One way of helping nature to thrive is through Acts of Restorative Kindness - making sure that we are sharing kindly the patches of earth where we live. Whether we are responsible for a windowbox or a garden, we can all help create a place of refuge for the countless other creatures who also call it home.

Creating an ARK space means thinking a bit differently, intentionally allowing nature to heal the land with her choice of plants, rather than impose orderliness and showy blooms. Aim to please nature, rather than human society. A simple sign to declare your ARK may help others to appreciate what you are doing and inspire them to create their own!

### Reconsider your lawn

The concept of a lawn grew rapidly during the Industrial Revolution as a status symbol. Before then predominantly only very wealthy people could afford to have land where they were not growing their own food. At a time of huge biodiversity loss, it makes sense to turn as much land as possible back to a more natural state, rather than devote time, money and effort to sterile 'lawn enforcement'.



### Ditch chemicals

Gardens now typically use ten times more chemicals per acre than industrially farmed agricultural land. The aim is to let life thrive, not poison things. Hopefully soon natural insect predators will return to help keep your

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## GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

ARK ecosystem in balance.

### Water

A small bowl of water, with a twig or stone as a ramp to allow creatures to escape will be a beneficial addition, if there is no natural water in your ARK.

### Native plants

Many of the plants that want to grow in our soils we have considered 'weeds', ignoring the value that they have in supporting local insects and restoring the correct natural balance to soils and habitats. Native plants – those that grow naturally in the area where they have evolved - are essential in creating safe spaces for wildlife.

Wherever we live, the plants native to a particular area will provide just the right food for other members of the

local wildlife community. We have a lot to learn from nature's intelligence!

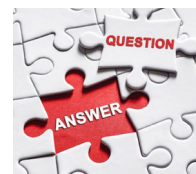


To find out more, look at the following websites. Kent Wildlife Trust/Buglife citizen's science project - <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/our-projects/bugs-matter>  
We Are The ARK - <https://wearetheark.org/>

**Jakki Phillips**

## January Quiz Answers from p41

1. Janus, God of beginnings and transitions
2. Penguin
3. A good year
4. Julius Caesar
5. National Puzzle Day
6. Charing Cross
7. Wolf
8. A wet spring
9. Houseplants
10. 1927
11. Ernie Wise
12. Pierre de Coubertin
13. 1912
14. True (in the northern hemisphere)
15. 1863





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## VOLUNTEER/BABY MEALS



After a rather quiet year for babies in Westcott, the volunteer cooks were delighted when not one but two families with new babies called on our support in November and December.



Hayzel-May

Little Hayzel-May arrived a bit earlier than expected, so the family on Watson Road were grateful for the support of our cooks soon after their return from hospital.

Riley, daughter of Carla and Tom of Guildford Road, arrived a few weeks ago and being from a family of “feeders” Carla and Tom have only just found they needed our support once their freezer full of Granny’s cooking had run out!



Carla & Tom with baby Riley

Huge thanks to all the cooks who have bought, cooked and delivered hot meals to these families, (some cooks have even done both families on the same night!). It makes a huge difference for the families as they adjust to life with a new baby not to have to think or worry about cooking a meal in the evenings. It’s a highly valued community initiative which has been going well over 20 years.

Please get in touch if you’d like to help out by joining our cooks list, or if you live in Westcott and you’re expecting a baby or know someone who is... we’re really happy to help.



**Anna Kemkers**  
**07710425487**

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