

# WHEATLEY URC NEWSLETTER



**July 2020**

# Covering Thoughts

*To linger in the aspen plantation early in the morning has been one of the joys of recent weeks. To me the trees form a community. I enter as a guest and an observer of their changing moods. They are often a noisy lot as the canopy of leaves is high and catches the least breath of breeze. In high winds the noise blots out all birdsong but mostly their chatter ripples gently like the waves of the sea.*

## **Aspen**

### *Listen*

*The dialogue drifts from one to another.*

*Lithe limbs lengthen, touch sister then brother.*

*Voices raised in debate progress to debacle.*

*Points pounded irate, heads shaking, eyes sparkle.*

*Thrusting fingers, hushing and shushing.*

*Tempers raised. All is pulling and pushing.*

*Hang on let us pause, hold our breath for a moment,*

*consider all options and reach for agreement.*

*Released once again from the weight of the argument,*

*heads raised in relief and united in judgement.*

*So softly a sigh sounds, and with shaking and shifting,*

*each settles in place, grace falling, hearts lifting.*

**Christine**

# Pastoral Letter

It's some years ago now, but I remember wanting to catch up with old colleagues at Churches Together in England (CTE), and visiting the office in London a few months after I had left. Outside, everything looked much the same. Nearby, men were digging up the road; nothing had changed there then – we often seemed to have to work to the accompaniment of pneumatic drills! Inside were the same familiar faces, and it was good to hear people's news. But things *had* changed: desks had been moved around, staff had moved offices to suit a new system of working. My old corner was occupied by a new member of staff (whose desk was much tidier than mine used to be!).

Places we have left stay the same in our minds, but in reality they move on. I remember West Indian friends from a church in North London deciding to “go home” back to the Jamaica they had left many years before. What they found was that things were different, not as they remembered. “Home” was in the UK, and they decided to come back again.

Change is difficult to accept but can be a sign of growth, a willingness to develop and adapt to the world as it now is. I feel that we need both change and stability in our lives: we can cope with change if some things are still familiar.

We've had to cope with huge changes to our lives over the past months, our usual routines thrown out of the window, or substantially adapted to cope with lockdown and the threat of the virus. Hopefully there has been enough that has been familiar – friends' faces seen on the screen during our Zoom worship, chats over the phone and more recently in our gardens, the comfortable setting of our own homes – to keep our spirits up.

As lockdown begins to ease, things will not be quite the same as they were, so we'll still need to do some adapting to “the new normal” in our church life as in the wider world. Elders are giving thoughts to this, as the situation develops. And I hope that we can build on the things we've learnt or found valuable, and in the wider community not to lose the community spirit which has built up during these difficult times.

We see this pattern of change and stability in the seasons – winter can be a difficult time, but we know that spring will come, and we are able to see the signs

well ahead, in the early snowdrops and other bulbs spearing their way through the hard soil. A new season on its way, new and yet familiar. We see it too in worship: a familiar pattern helps us to be open to new ways of approaching God. We are willing to learn a new song, because we can still sing some of the old ones! We have coped with Zoom and with worshipping in our sitting rooms, because familiar people and elements of worship are there.

The church year again has this pattern of change and stability, moving us on through the story of our faith, reminding us afresh of God's goodness to us as we travel through the "seasons" of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and beyond. Each season gives us the opportunity to reflect on a different aspect of our faith, keeping it fresh and new as well as stable and familiar. The pattern is repeated in the personality of God. God is pictured as our rock, but also as the wind which blows where it will. He is our support in the vagaries of life, not so that we can stay where we are, but so that we will have the strength and courage to move along new paths with him.

One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go,  
from the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you.

You are older than the world can be,  
you are younger than the life in me;  
ever old and ever new,  
keep me travelling along with you.

(Sydney Carter)

**Wishing you every blessing. Pauline**



## Prayers

**Please remember in your prayers** the members in Malcolm Benson's pastoral list: Graham Dobson, Ann & Fred Hardiman, Ann & Norbert Gajda, Joel Rasmussen, Ann Wild, Jeff Clarke and Siobhan Fraser & Alyn Shipton

**We also ask you to pray** for the members of the Pastoral Care Team: Ann Bettess, Jean Boxall, Angela Holdaway, Rob Holdaway, Barbara Joiner, Pauline Main and Frances Simpson



The United Reformed Church

WHEATLEY URC  
CARE FOR THE WORLD  
ANNOUNCEMENT

# ZIMBABWE...

...WE HEAR YOUR CRIES!



## TROUBLING STATISTICS

The distressing facts that we could share about Zimbabwe are never-ending, but to name a few:

- 51% of the population are undernourished
- life expectancy, although rising, is only 61 years
- only 40% of people have access to proper sanitation
- gender based violence and corruption are rife...
- ...and the 'shadow economy' accounts for 60% of all economic activity

## WHEATLEY URC'S COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

As many of you know, **Commitment For Life** is the global justice programme of the URC, working in partnership with **Christian Aid** (and **Global Justice Now**).

**Wheatley URC** is a **Commitment For Life** church, and (in addition to our specific support of **Christian Aid**) we have made donations to them through collection boxes, one-off donations and annual charitable giving.

As Pauline indicated recently, inspired by both the amazing initiatives that **Christian Aid** undertakes with its partners in Zimbabwe and by the 2020 World Day of Prayer from Zimbabwe, your **Care For The World** team have **decided to make Zimbabwe our focus of support over the next year.**



**1 in 4**  
Zimbabwean women have experienced sexual violence



**1 in 3**  
Zimbabwean women have experienced physical violence

Source: UN Women Africa

# Dance Chapel

Dance connects us to the movement of life and is for **every – body**

*Cynthia Winton Henry*

Early last year I tentatively wrote a little piece for our newsletter on ‘dancing with monks and mystics’. I invited others to join me in learning some specific dances around the particular charism and theology of these wise men and women from our Christian tradition.

I was pretty nervous about this. I love to move and dance and find this form of creative expression an intimate and nourishing way to connect with the divine and to pray. But I really didn’t know if anyone else would want to join me. Well they did!! And so began a new journey with others from our community exploring the joy of movement as a spiritual practice. We have become and continue to become dancing pray-ers.

We come together once a fortnight on a Friday morning (currently on zoom), to pray, through gesture, movement, dance, voice and stillness. We have danced our prayers in our chapel, our hall and our new Mulberry room where we offered a dance of blessing for the beauty of the space itself and for everyone who would be using it.

We begin by coming into our bodies and souls with an opening prayer, lighting a candle - bringing whatever is on our hearts and minds - a concern, gratitude, hope or desire or an intention for family, community and world. We then warm up gently using the same sequence each week and most often with music. There is something nourishing and grounding about familiarity as we come to know the warm up well, listening more deeply to how our body is on that particular day, what it needs and how we are in ourselves.

We always have a time to dance/pray “freely” in response to a poem or short piece of writing to celebrate the sacred within and around us - to reflect, be ourselves and centre in the dance of life. We dance with music and can respond however we want to – move, dance, be still, sit, rest, listen – even lie down. There is no right or wrong way to dance or to pray. We listen to our own body wisdom and follow it.

Our culture often encourages judgment and perfectionism with regards to our body-selves so we practice receiving all of ourself - humility, awkwardness, exuberance, fears, tiredness, aches, joys, laughter. We simply allow our dance to be a doorway to divine presence.

We then learn, over a few weeks, a specific choreographed dance that expresses a particular charism of a monk and mystic from early centuries to the current day. We notice if there is a virtue or quality that one of these wise followers of Jesus can help us open to, or we might dance on behalf of someone in our lives that we carry in prayer.

You might remember our dance of Amma Syncletica, *“we must kindle the divine fire within ourselves”*, that we offered as part of our worship service to celebrate the opening of the Mulberry room. We have also danced with Hildegard of Bingen, Benedict of Nursia and St Brigid.

Our whole purpose in following a spiritual path and nurturing these practices in our lives is to expand our inner freedom which expands our capacity for loving the world.

Here is what some of those who come to dance chapel say;

*“time to find myself.... and to forget myself; refreshment for body and soul; much needed and much appreciated.”.... Ellen*



*“I came to dance chapel after seeing and experiencing the dance at the worship for the opening of the Mulberry Room. I thoroughly enjoy the sessions, the dancing and the music. They are warm, welcoming and inspirational. They are also great fun and I feel very relaxed, calm and happy afterwards.”... Jen*

*“I came to what I first called ‘mystic dancing’, more out of curiosity to be honest than anything else, but I was willing to try! Movement as a spiritual discipline sounded a bit weird and*

*“new age” but little by little, it grew on me. And now I value it a lot because it is a way of praying with your whole body, just following what I suppose is your inner joy to be alive and be thankful for it. We dance and move either as a group which has its own momentum, or individually and there are no clever words to get in the way, no trying to strive to get better at it, no judgement from anybody on anybody, just flowing movement and your relationship to God... Come and give it a go! “*

**... Laurence**

At dance chapel we believe that if you are breathing you are moving. That we come as we are, learning to let all sorts of feelings and attitudes be woven into the dance. In this way, we become more wholesome, more whole hearted, maybe even more holy.

And when there's nothing burning to come through, when nothing is whispering to be included, **we simply dance because we can**, and that in itself frees us up. It's fun, it's nourishing, it builds community and surely this too is prayer.

## An invitation

If you love to move and dance or are curious about this as a way of prayer and would like to 'come and see', then do please contact me, Bobbie Stormont at [bobbiestormont@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiestormont@gmail.com)

If you're thinking, "but I'm not a dancer" or "I feel awkward," or "I can't even walk very well," I hope to reassure you. You don't need a special talent to move. You don't need to be "graceful" or especially co-ordinated. You don't need a body "that's in shape." You can sit down. If you can move a finger, your head or hand you can dance. You can dance simply by imagining yourself dancing.

In the old testament David danced before the Lord, Miriam went out dancing with all the women, and in Isaiah, they go out with joy, are led forth in peace, the mountains and hills burst into song, and all the trees of the field clap their hands!!

And the bonus - it's healthy to keep moving – good for mind, body, soul and spirit.

*A heart-felt thank you to InterPlay, who have been my inspiration, trainer and guide for Dance Chapel and exploring body wisdom practices. ([www.interplay.org](http://www.interplay.org))*

**Bobbie Stormont**

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## Guess the Films - Emoji Fun 😊

Have you finished all your puzzle and crossword books during lockdown? Have you been watching more films? Are you emoji literate? If not you might soon be! Have some fun with these. More on pages 11 & 17. Answers on page 19.



# Local ‘Sewing Bee’

Back in May, Laurence initiated a sewing bee, inviting sewers from Wheatley, Summertown and Marston URC’s to make face masks, pre-empting the Government directive to wear them on public transport, in shops etc. One wonderful enticement was that Laurence provided the material, and all fabulous African prints!



It wasn’t long before they had sewn over 200 masks! Laurence said; “We have raised nearly £1100.00, all for the NHS charity and the Air Ambulance Service. Money is still coming in. We could not have done this without our wonderful “sewing bees” from the 3 churches.”

A huge thank you to Laurence and our sewers; Debi Kidd, Catherine Harding, Cynthia Mancey, Barbara Joiner and her friend Eileen, Sue Smith and Ann Moss.

No doubt we are going to see some very ‘on trend’ worshippers in the near future!

~\*~



# Lockdown Baking

## Debi Kidd's Jam, Sourdough and Fruit Squares

I love baking anyway and have done quite a bit during lockdown. I've made jam and sourdough neither of which I've made before. The



jam was made with rhubarb from John's garden and the bread from a starter from my friend. Other favourites that I've made quite a few times just lately are date and apple



squares. If anyone would like a starter for the sourdough

I can deliver this or if you would like the recipe for date and apple squares, do get in touch. Recipe for Debi's fruit squares on page 15.

## Pat Simpson's American Biscuits – only 3 ingredients!

Heat the oven to 210 degrees C

Oil greaseproof paper or baking parchment on an oven tray.



Lightly but thoroughly mix 8 oz flour, 2 and a half oz butter, 5 fluid oz milk. Turn out sticky dough on to a floured surface and gently roll out longways to about one inch thick and fold in three, repeating this 4 or 5 times. Cut out with a small floured scone cutter, straight down and straight up, do not twist, then place on oiled sheet on oven tray. Paint the tops with

milk and put into hot oven for 10 minutes. Place on cooling tray. Enjoy with a savoury or sweet filling. Will freeze and reheat in microwave.

## Elizabeth Walkey's Treacle Tart

I was flicking through a baking book and came across the recipe for **Treacle Tart**. Andy is rather partial to treacle tart but I haven't made one for years. It may have very low nutritional value but I followed the recipe, added some lemon rind and hay presto it was fantastic, sweet, chewy and tangy.

Who wants a healthy cake when you can have treacle tart?

## Barbara Joiner's Banana Loaf

A recipe from 40 years ago when we had a lunch and tea club at Sanderstead URC.

4ozs margarine  
3 mashed bananas  
8ozs S.R. Flour  
4ozs sugar  
8ozs mixed fruit  
1 egg

### Method:

Cream marg & sugar together until white and fluffy, beat in the egg. Fold in rest of ingredients. Place mixture in a 1lb loaf tin, cook for 1 hour at 160 degrees C fan. Cool on rack. Works every time

~\*~\*~

## I Could Tell You About.....

Remember 'I could tell you about.....' in last month's newsletter about your experience of lockdown and an invitation to send in your headline? Well Jean did just that and here it is.

I could tell you about..... making two baby cardigans which are already on the very beautiful baby.

I could tell you about..... making some masks alongside and giving these to Carers with whom I have contact. Black and white seems to be the most popular. However I must admit that they are taking me much longer to make than I anticipated and that is after I learned again how to use my sewing machine!

~\*~\*~

## Guess the Films - Emoji Fun 😊



## COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS for July 2020

Note: leaders may choose to use other readings

Date	5 <sup>th</sup> July	12 <sup>th</sup> July	19 <sup>th</sup> July	26 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>First Reading</b>	Zechariah 9: 9-12	Isaiah 55: 10-13	Isaiah 44: 6-8	1 Kings 3:5-12
<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 145: 8-14	Psalm 65: 9-13	Psalm 86: 11-17	Psalm 119: 129-136
<b>New Testament</b>	Romans 7: 15-25a	Romans 8: 1-11	Romans 8: 12-25	Romans 8: 26-39
<b>Gospel</b>	Matthew 11: 16-19 & 25-30	Matthew 13: 1-9 & 18-23	Matthew 13: 24-30 & 36-43	Matthew 13: 31-33 & 44-52

**July 5th** What is promised to the overworked is not so much peace of mind as deliverance from oppression and exploitation.

**July 12th** The purpose of parables is not to make things easy for us, but to make us think.

**July 19th** The servants in the parable have a second question - not why is it a wicked world but what should we do about it- there is a chance this can be answered.

**July 26th** Teachers must become learners.

Richard B



## Zoom Services Rota for July

Date	Worship leaders	Readers	Intecessors
<b>July 5th</b>	Pauline & Cara (HC)	Marston and	Summertown folks
<b>July 12</b>	Richard	Rob Holdaway	Barbara Joiner
<b>July 19</b>	Colin (HC)	Robert Harding	Malcom Benson
<b>July 26</b>	Laurence	Pauline Shelley	Ann Bettess

# “I’m fine, thank you!”

Having been married for thirty years to someone who is not British and having many friends “from the continent” has made me acutely aware of the differences of responses to some situations. One of them is the response to the innocuous and everyday question “how are you?” In France, Germany or Spain, many people do not mind at all telling you how they are, sometimes at great length...! In England, the most common and automatic response is “fine, thank you” even if you know that the person is not fine at all. By temperament, British people are generally more private than their continental “over-emotional” counterpart and do not like to talk about their feelings: “stiff upper lip” and all that, for which by the way there is no direct translation in French or Spanish!

But whatever the nationality or the culture, saying how we really feel, means not only having the words to express our emotions but also taking risks and being vulnerable. It is a leap in the dark. We do not want to appear needy or “weak”. What will happen if we cry, will they run away? Often, we worry about the listener’s ability to cope with the burden of our unhappiness. Or we may even fear that they will judge us, avoid us in future or think less of us. If the image that we have projected to the world is that of a Sunny Jim or a Cheerful Charlie, never complaining, always there for everyone else and then, one day, we stop being that person, then how can we dare say that actually not everything is rosy ... Another reason why we might not say what we really feel when we are down in the dumps, is that we all want to protect our loved ones from our own deepest anxieties because one thing worse than being sad or unhappy yourself is worrying about the unhappiness of those closest to you. I understood this when I was a Samaritan volunteer and heard so many people who could only talk to an absolute stranger about their deepest feelings which they would never dream of revealing to friends or family.

The counterpart of this of course is that many of us are not good at listening as we don’t give people the space to talk, either because we are rushing to do something else or more often than not, because we simply do not know how to cope with what people say. Listening *in silence* is enough but is

difficult. When they open up, most people don't want answers or to be told that we understand their situation because something similar happened to us. How many times have we heard when we start recounting something "Oh yeah, it is like me"! This is usually not helpful at all because the truth is that we do not know how another person might feel. I remember a caller during one of my Samaritan shifts, who said to me that his wife had just died. The normal, automatic response would have been "Oh I am sorry" but the Samaritan training kicked in and I said instead "How do you feel about it?" and he said "I am so glad the bitch is dead..."

Telling someone we understand how they feel is natural as we want to help and reassure the person, but it takes the focus away from the authenticity of their response and uniqueness of their situation. If we listen, really listen, it is likely that the other person will not recall later that we didn't have an answer or a solution to their problem; they will remember the tone of voice and if we were kind and sympathetic. Keeping silent and attentive is difficult when a painful situation is revealed to us, but that silence is a form of respect and attention on our part and will be filled by the other person. As a Samaritan volunteer, I was often thanked at the end of the call for my advice when I had given absolutely none. Instead the conversation had been about exploring the options open to the caller in their situation and what would likely be the consequences of any course of action. Questions such as. "Why did you do that", "If I were you, I would do that", "I think that you should..." generally put the other person on the defensive. Just being with someone who is experiencing problems is often enough. And for those callers to Samaritans who didn't want to "bother" or "worry" a loved one about a problem, I would just ask them whether in fact the loved one might consider it an honour and a privilege that they would choose to share their worries with them...

And of course, a hug is worth a thousand words ... when we can hug again!

**Peter Devlin**

~\*~

# From the Archives ..... 1 Metre or 2?



Liz Barry

~~~~

# Is this the Time?

*They asked him, "Lord, is this the time  
when you will restore sovereignty to Israel?"  
He replied, "It is not for you to know...  
But you will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;  
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,  
in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."  
—Acts 1.6-8*

Is this the time we will re-open?  
Now will our political party dominate?  
When will we return to normal?  
Can we be safe, and privileged, and in power?

No. You can bear witness  
to the power of love.  
It is not for you to know the future,  
or to be ascendant or in power,  
or to control things.  
It is for you to be a witness to love  
even when things are not restored.  
This is not second best: it is true power,  
whose waves ripple through the world.

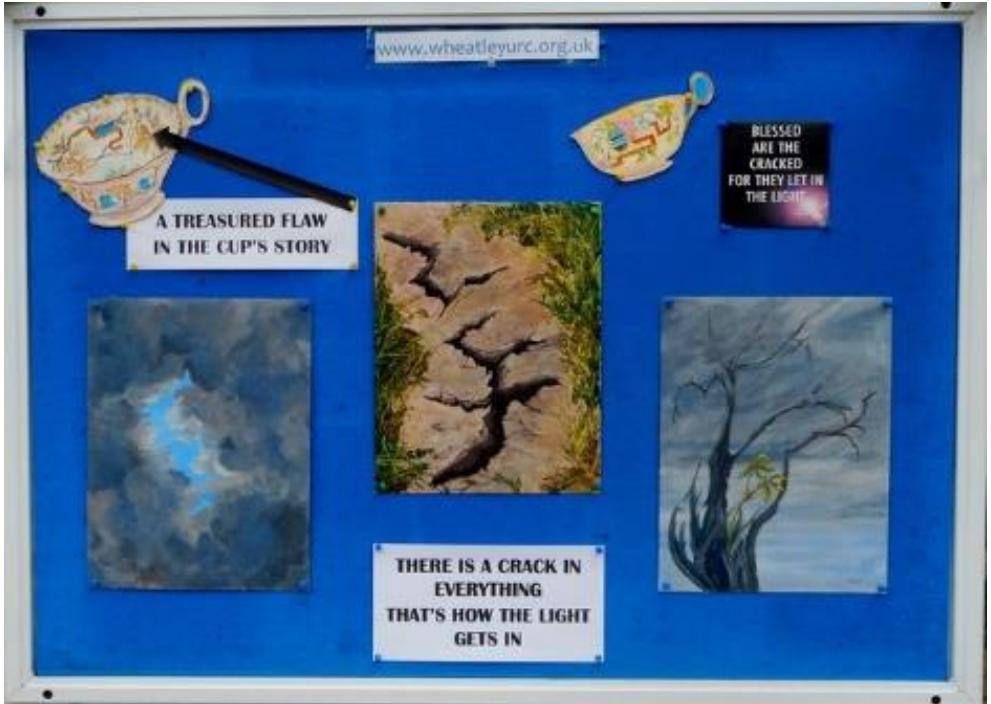
The center of the universe is not on the throne.  
It is in your heart.

Receive love.  
Trust the power.  
Bear witness.

**Pastor Steve** - Unfolding Light (United Methodist Pastor - Massachusetts USA)

**Bobbie Stormont**

# Our Current Noticeboard



## Wayside Pulpit

Here is the latest edition of our outdoor Church Noticeboard from Christine. Through her contribution, often including some of her own original artwork, we hope to reach out to those passing by with art, poems and inspirational thoughts which often come from members of our community.

~ ~ ~

## Guess the Films - Emoji Fun 😊

9. ☁️ ☁️ ☁️ 🐵 🐵 ☁️ ☁️ ☁️
10. 🧑🏻🧘 🚣 🐼
11. 😊 😡 🍌

# Praise Psalm 3

1. Praise the Lord! Let all voices and instruments be tuned to sing His praises!
2. Let those who are sad, rejoice! Let the lonely be brought hope, as they pray and sing to the Lord, their Heavenly Father and their Friend.
3. Let those in pain be comforted and healed, as they hear the songs of God's people. Let the music of instruments bring them healing balm, and may the Power of their Creator restore their minds and bodies. May their spirits rise up, and let them take heart, for the Lord is greater than pain and disease, and has overcome death, that all may live! His Kingdom stands for eternity!
4. Let the songs of angels be joined with the music and song of earth to bring joy to the Lord Most High! May His Love gifts be given back to Him, in love, from those who worship in the Light of His freedom, yet also from earth's dark places where His Light is present; even though it be as a candle flame, it will never be extinguished.
5. Let the labours of the days be filled with the gentle songs of God's peace, and let their melodies fill the hearts of those who rest. Let all commit their ways to the Lord, for He will never disappoint them, and their Life in Him will never end.
6. Bring to the Lord His due! Fill His House with gifts of all that He has given to us, His creatures. May the poor, the ill, the weak, the homeless, the despairing and the addicted find refuge and hope in the House of the Lord! May those caught in a web of their own making be set on to the paths of peace, as they hear

the songs of the Lord, which stir the heart, and the words spoken in His Name, which bring Life!

7. For the Lord is a Friend to the empty, the lost and the friendless, that they may rejoice! Sing His praises, all the earth! Let none remain in the jaws of death, but may Life and hope be within them, breaking the chains of tyranny and injustice both in and around them, and causing them to sing the everlasting songs of Freedom! Praise the Lord!

***David Herring***

~ ~ ~

## Guess the Film - Emoji Fun 😊 Answers

- |                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Breakfast at Tiffany's | 7. Lord of the Rings               |
| 2. Silence of the Lambs   | 8. Les Miserables                  |
| 3. Mary Poppins           | 9. Gorillas in the Mist            |
| 4. Finding Nemo           | 10. Life of Pi                     |
| 5. Driving Miss Daisy     | 11. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly |
| 6. Slumdog Millionaire    |                                    |

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## Deadlines

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 is the deadline for the August Newsletter. Please send copy to: [newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wheatleyurc.org.uk) Paper copy can be given to Bobbie Stormont.

## Disclaimer

The Editors welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to publish or not.



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