

Thanks to Nick Miller  
for the Masthead



No: 635 December 2023

Wormingford Rec Trust Presents:

# Christmas Craft Fair

2ND DEC  
12-4

Wormingford Village Hall

Santas Grotto | Mince Pies | Shopping  
Kids Craft Table | Music | Mulled Wine

Free Entry

## Snowball

~ Shel Silverstein

I made myself a snowball,  
As perfect as could be,  
I thought I'd keep it as a pet,  
And let it sleep with me.

I made it some pyjamas,  
And a pillow for its head,  
Then last night it ran away,  
But first - it wet the bed!



Are you going home for Christmas? Have you written you'll be there?  
Going home to kiss the mother and to show her that you care?  
Going home to greet the father in a way to make him glad?  
If you're not I hope there'll never come a time you'll wish you had.  
Just sit down and write a note — it will make their heart strings hum  
With a tune of perfect gladness — if you'll tell them that you'll come.

Edgar A. Guest

## Wormingford's Christmas Tree Light Switch On

### Santa is coming to Wormingford

Follow Santa through the village from 5pm  
to the Christmas tree light switch on &  
Square Draw from 6pm  
at The Crown Wormingford

Bring your  
Christmas Baubles  
to hang on the tree

## Saturday 9th December

Square game  
£1 per Square  
all proceeds to  
St Andrews Church,  
Wormingford

SUPPORTED BY

Bring a  
donation for

**DISCLAIMER:** The statements, opinions and data contained in this publication are solely those of the individual authors and contributors and not the Parish Council, the Editor nor the Publisher of the Worm.

Items for inclusion in the Worm must be with the editor by the 21st of the month by email to: [thewormeditor@gmail.com](mailto:thewormeditor@gmail.com)

## *A Wormingford Life.....as told to Gill Byrne*

Pete Brennan was born in his grandmother's house in Dagenham. I asked him about his first memories of life there and he recalled things like wearing the balaclava that his Mum had made for him and all the knitting his Mum used to do. Dad worked as a groundkeeper at Parsloes Park but it was only when Pete was 12, that his Mum started to go to work. Mum working meant that the family were able to have carpet on the stairs - before that, Pete's Dad had put thick cardboard down, painting it to give it a pattern. Mum also bought a new 'hovering hoover' with her wages. Pete recalls coming home from school, helping himself to a bowl of cornflakes and, after vacuuming the floor for his Mum, settling down to watch a whole host of cowboy programmes which came on the telly at 5.00pm. Joy!!! [and what a good boy for doing the housework after school] A love of cowboy memorabilia has stayed with Pete all his life.

Pete's Dad was in the RAF 603 Squadron. One day a 'tropical kit' was issued to him so he knew that he was about to be posted somewhere hot. At this time Pete's grandad was gravely ill. On the day that Pete's dad left by ship for his tropical posting, Pete's grandad died. Pete recalls being told that due to his bereavement, his Dad was returned to England. Later on its journey, the ship that Pete's Dad would have been aboard was torpedoed, with the loss of all on board. Pete's Dad would also have perished had he not returned to shore and he used to say that his Dad had died to save him.

Pete didn't like going to school- there were 42 in the class so he couldn't wait to leave. But when he did leave, Pete found that he didn't know what to do with himself. Should he be a butcher? A make-up artist for films? A cabinet maker?? He actually ended up being a butcher's boy, although the boss made him produce sausages and dripping all day. Though his sausages were legendary, Pete left as soon as he could—for the building trade.

No girlfriends were on the horizon at this time- Pete felt he was too shy. And then, one Saturday evening, he and a friend met two girls on their way back from Ilford Palais. They arranged a date at 'Whiskey a go go' in Soho which by all accounts was a great success! Pete and his date, Denise, got back home at 5.00am. Denise lived with her grandparents and grandad was a very old-fashioned fellow who did not approve of such shenanigans, so her Nan had to sneak her in before grandad found out! Pete married Denise when he was 24 and they moved to Jersey, where he became a bit of a hippy, abandoning the 'mod' style he had followed until then. He grew his hair long and wore an ex -army leather jerkin! Very fetching! They had a free and easy life in Jersey but things changed when Denise fell pregnant -they couldn't afford to pay for doctors on the island. So they returned to Dagenham, eventually getting a flat in Barking where they raised their two children. During this time, Pete worked as a joiner and carpenter.

Denise and Pete didn't stay together and after divorcing, Pete settled down with a new partner, eventually becoming her carer. It was then that Pete experienced another life changing event, in the form of a deadly aneurism which led to him undergoing major heart surgery. Only a very small percentage of people survive this experience and Pete was very lucky to be one of them. is, Pete was not able to speak after his illness and had to go through a long process of rehab and physio before he was ready to leave Basildon hospital. He can't speak highly enough of the nurses who cared for him there. Eventually, Pete left hospital to live with his son before being well enough to move into a bungalow in Wormingford. The first time Pete visited the bungalow with his family they all got lost up by the air field and had to be rescued by the housing officer!

Despite ongoing challenges to his health, Pete feels very settled in Wormingford. He speaks very highly of the wonderful friends he has made here and of the kind locals who help him out with things like walking his beloved dog, Buddy, and making sure he has everything he needs.

Pete would specifically like to send a huge thank you to Debbie Moore - a person who goes 'above and beyond' to help him out.

A very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to you , Pete!!



Lewis Barber writes.....



*I know it continues to be a difficult time for many households in our community. Even with inflation easing, the winter period is likely to be challenging and uncertain for many. I want to ensure all who need it get the help necessary. Please do check out Essex County Council's Essex Wellbeing Service. This can be found online or by calling 03003039988. This is a long term predecessor to part of our pandemic support. It covers help from physical and mental health to financial support to volunteering opportunities in our local neighbourhoods. There is also help available on Colchester Council's 'Cost of Living' website or by calling 01206 505885. Please also feel free to contact me on [cllr.lewis.barber@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.lewis.barber@essex.gov.uk) or 07876237137 with any questions.*

*It was great to see repairs finally done down Fordham Road, Wormingford Road and into Church Road, Moat Road, Mill Road and Plummers Road in Fordham. Getting repairs sorted was a priority and I was pleased we were able to get the resources to do it. Our Highways maintenance budget was increased by over £17m this year. This was a combination of local funding I voted for and Government support. Government is also providing us with an extra £121m over the next 10 years, plus any other increases we fund locally, to help with road and pavement maintenance. Our next budget will be decided in February.*

*I am working with the Parish Council and bus companies on reliability issues in our local bus service. If you experience problems, please do ensure you contact me with specific details of incidents (i.e. times, what happened etc) so that we can collate these and ensure they are investigated.*

*The A12 and A120 capacity, safety and ongoing roadworks remains an ongoing challenge. Both roads are responsibility of National Highways, rather than locally, making dealing with them even more tricky. I am working with local parishes to try and influence the works. Our agreed plan of action was as follows:*

*1. The parishes are to identify roads that parishes wish to have surveys on so that we can obtain factual data showing increase in traffic usage. Most roads have prior surveys that can be useful for comparisons. There is already a request in for the main road down from the A120 to Chappel via Great Tey. The aim is to have these done before Christmas.*

*2. A meeting between A12 and A120 National Highway's project manager officers, Essex Highways and Members of Parliaments in advance of future roadworks and the A12 widening scheme is being scheduled for January. The data should be available then to form part of the discussion.*

*3. Try and get the new A120 between Marks Tey and Braintree back up the agenda for funding priority by the Government.*

*This is a snapshot of work we are doing. My updates include via the Worm, email newsletter updates, other leaflets and social media. If you wish to subscribe to my email updates, please do let me know. Any questions on any matter important to you, please contact me on [cllr.lewis.barber@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.lewis.barber@essex.gov.uk)*



## WORMINGFORD HANDBELL RINGERS

are looking for more players

Are you looking to learn to do something  
completely different?

We are a friendly group that meet weekly on a  
Thursday between 1pm-3pm  
in Fordham Village Hall.

Musical knowledge is not essential but you  
must be able to count

If you would like to find out more  
then call 0777481912



## *ART - Thinking of those for whom Christmas isn't always merry.*



**ART** supports hundreds of people every year providing community projects, education, and accredited training in a range of land-based studies as well as mentoring and advocate support supporting some of the most vulnerable, hardest to reach and isolated people in Essex including their Wormingford site in Colchester. Christmas can be such a lovely time for us all but many of ART's participants do not have the same luxuries or family and friends to spend it with. If you're struggling this festive period, we have 5 ways to cope with Christmas struggles:

ART will be closed to their participants from the 20<sup>th</sup> of December and will be back to teaching week commencing the 8<sup>th</sup> of January. Despite being closed, they are signposting participants, and anyone else who needs support over the festive period, to these local organisations:

**Christmas Lunches at Salvation Army** (call to book) 01206 575 920. Butt Road, Colchester, CO3 3DA.

**Colchester Foodbank** open Boxing Day 12-2pm at 3, Tollgate Retail Park, Tollgate West, Colchester, CO3 8RG.

Operation Christmas at **Emmaus** - Christmas Presents for 0–16-year-olds. 175 Magdalen Street, Colchester, CO1 2JX. 01206 541616.

**Mind helpline 0300 123 3393** provide information and support by phone and email. Their Infoline is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm. It will be **closed** on 25 and 26 December 2023.

**Side by Side** is Minds supportive online community for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. You can access the community any time, including on Christmas Day and other bank holidays.

**Samaritans 116 123** (freephone) Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

**Age UK 0800 678 1602** Information and support for older people. Age UK's English helpline is open 8am to 7pm, every day of the year.

**CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserable) 0800 58 58 58** provides listening services, information, and support for anyone who needs to talk, including a web chat. CALM's helpline and webchat are open from 5pm to midnight, every day of the year.

**Combat Stress 0800 1381 619** Treatment and support for armed forces veterans who have mental health problems. Combat Stress's helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247** free 24-hour helpline for women who have experienced domestic abuse and violence, with all—female advisors. Also offers a live chat and can help to find refuge accommodation. Run by the domestic violence charity Refuge. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

**Shout Text SHOUT to 85258** Confidential 24/7 text service offering support if you're in crisis and need immediate help. Shout are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

**NHS 111** Non-emergency medical help and advice for people in England.

**CALL 999 in a medical emergency or crisis.** In the meantime, whilst we are open we have lots of fun Christmas activities planned. Throughout December our participants can enjoy wreath making, decorating and Christmas horticulture activities as well as a mini-Christmas day, so everyone has the chance to enjoy this time. We hope everyone reading has a lovely Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year from everyone at ART.



# ST ANDREW'S CHURCH SERVICES

## DECEMBER 2023

December 10th- 11.00 Matins.

December 17th- 3.30 Candle lit carols round the Christmas tree.

December 24th- Midnight in Bethlehem. Holy Communion.

Please note – St Andrew's Church will only have regular services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays although special services such as Remembrance and Christmas will still be held.



## Word from the Vicarage.

Walking in a Winter Wonderland. I have just enjoyed a wonderful weeks break away with the family, including our 10 month old grandson, Elyan. Without giving too much away, and inadvertently advertising, our week was spent in Elveden Forest, in a place, I feel sure might be familiar to many people, ideally suited to family holidays. Arriving on Friday night, it was clear that preparations were already afoot for getting the sight ready for Christmas. By Monday evening, the lights were switched on, and for the next 4 days, we found ourselves in a Winter wonderland, with enchanted forests, twinkling lights, Elves springing up all over the place and frequent light dustings of snow. Knowing that I had to come home and go straight into Remembrance Sunday services, I really wasn't feeling quite ready for all this festive fun. But it is hard to resist getting drawn in when you have a young child with you! Any references to Christmas were cleverly avoided, it was most definitely a 'Winter Wonderland', Father Christmas, was Santa, with any reference to Christmas removed, and amidst the sparkling lights, the snow machines and Elves, there was no room for even just one nativity scene, pointing people to the real reason for the season. And of course, wishing to be open to all, there are probably many reasons for this. And yet as we stood and listened to Rudolph and his reindeer friends singing their 'Winter Wonderland' songs, amidst the 'Jingle Bells' and 'Chestnuts roasting on an open fire', they sang a wonderful rendition of 'Silent Night, Holy Night'. Or again, having popped along to hear the choir singing on a Tuesday night, they couldn't seem to resist throwing in 'O little town of Bethlehem' and encouraging everyone to sing along. Christmas carols are so deeply woven into the fabric of the season, that its almost as if no-one noticed, that every so often, the whole story of Christmas was told, in the familiar, beautiful words of a carol. I might sometimes want to rant at the desire of an increasingly secular world wanting to turn Christian festivals, into Wintervals. But still, we hear the voice of the angels sing, as the message of Christmas wafts through the air in the words of familiar carols. For those who have ears to hear, in the Carols and in the giving and receiving of gifts, we remember that at Christmas time we are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the ultimate gift for everyone.

Happy Christmas and may God Bless you and your family,

Heather



## Thank You

~ William Church

For your Christmas presents,  
I thank you one and all.  
For the big ones many thanks,  
And fewer for the small.

# Wormingford Parish Council (WPC)

Report for the months of October and November 2023



This report covers the meetings held on 12th October and 9th November 2023.

Councillors received a presentation from the Rural Communities Council of Essex (RCCE) who facilitated the recent Housing Needs Survey. The survey was returned by 25% of the residents in Wormingford, and ten households identified a housing need. Of those ten households six indicated a requirement for a local solution. RCCE have recommended that we consider a proposal for three - one bedroom properties and one - two bedroom property. The next stage is to meet potential housing association companies and explore if there are any likely sites for a small terrace of properties to meet this demand.

A proposal has been put forward by Lewis Barber to establish a local liaison group in conjunction with Fordham PC and local business owners in order to explore solutions to the increasing impact of heavy goods vehicles, especially at harvest times in the locality.

We are still short of one volunteer to enable the training and establishment of a local Speed Watch Group. Anyone willing to put their name forward should contact the Parish Clerk. Five residents have volunteered to form a Parish Path Partnership. Arrangements are now being put in place for training and the provision of equipment to enable this group to contribute to the maintenance of Public Rights of Way.

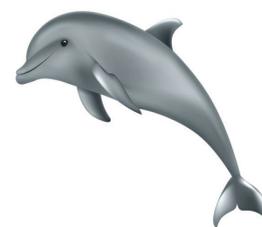
WPC is required to introduce a Biodiversity Policy along with all Town and Parish Councils and work will be undertaken to finalise a draft for adoption at the January 2024 meeting. It seems very early to be doing so but as there is no meeting in December WPC would like to wish all residents a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on 11th January at the Village Hall, commencing at 7.00pm. Please email any comments or views to the Parish Clerk at [wormingford@outlook.com](mailto:wormingford@outlook.com). Further information and the latest draft minutes and past copies of the Worm can be found at:

<https://wormingford.org/>



*"...man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much whilst all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were far more intelligent than man—for precisely the same reasons." -- Douglas Adams*



## Pause for thought.....

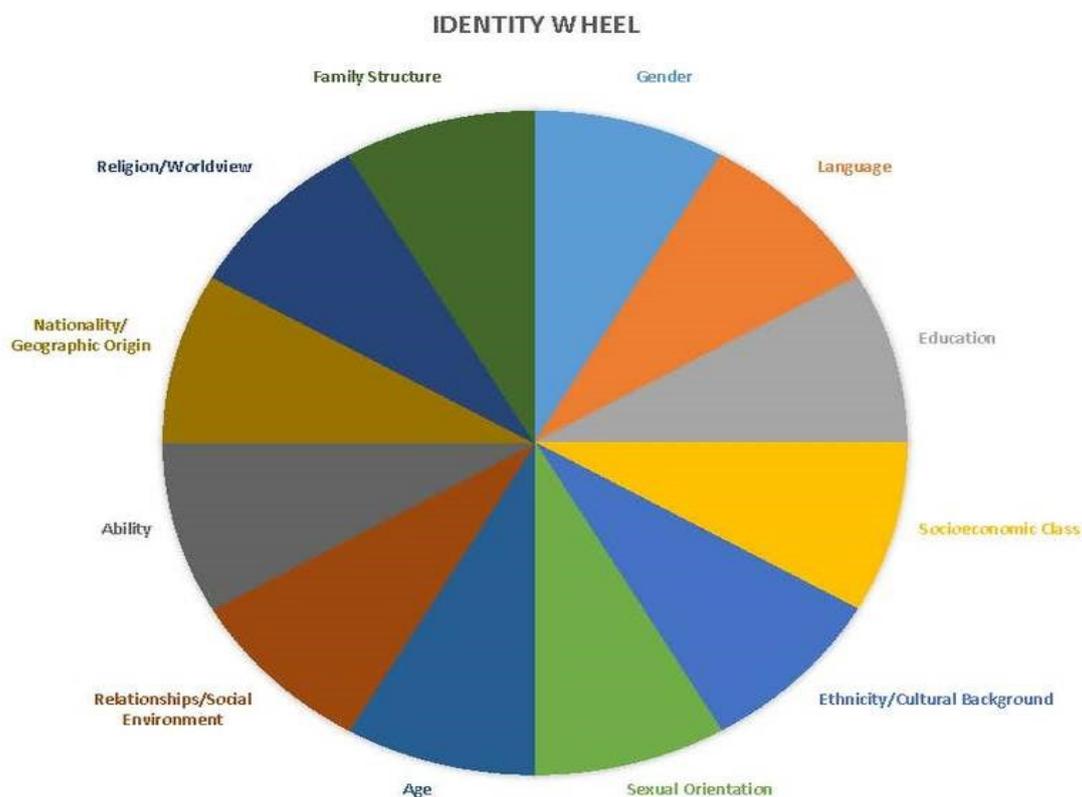
There's lots of talk about 'identity' at the moment isn't there? For whatever reason that might be, it's fun to take pause and consider our own identities from time to time. Have you ever thought about yours? Here's some thoughts on the matter.



We all have many different identities. Things such as belonging to or supporting a football team or being a member of a club, things that influence how we behave, how we were brought up, being grandparents, grieving, being short of money etc influence our sense of who we are. The society we live in may impose or expect conformity of our identities depending on which gender we were born. Although we can freely choose some aspects of our identity, this may be less than we might believe due to social conditioning.

The wheel below shows some of the different aspects of the average person's identity. It shows that any aspect of our identity is one of many factors and each one is influenced by all the others. Its complicated though; a person may feel that they do not have a 'religious identity' even though religion can still unconsciously "influence" their behaviour [for good or ill.] For someone who recognises that they have a specific identity, [they support West Ham, or the Labour party, or like Shirley Bassey or do drag or whatever], the size of that identity may be large or small, compared to all the other identities they may have. It's the same with politics –a person may say that she is "conservative" but her other identities may carry more influence in her life than her political identity. All these identities affect and flow though each other. For example, you could identify as 'queer green female' or a 'straight Jewish commuter'. Identity isn't fixed and evolves over time, especially with age. Someone who was a mod or Goth at 15 is unlikely to still be one when they are 75! Moving house or jobs can lead to a change in identity too, as do milestones like retirement or having a serious illness. Social relationships are a major factor in identity, with birth, death, marriage and divorce all imposing how we see ourselves and how others see us. Amid all these changes that everyone experiences through life, its not surprising that people look for things that remains constant and stable throughout the years. Perhaps Christmas forms that constant for many of us.

Dear Reader, whatever your glorious and unique identity, whatever it was in the past and may be in the future, I wish you a peaceful and very happy Christmas.



## *Del Coleman writes.....*

The season so far is proving a challenging one for the Reserves. Early October saw a slim defeat after a stoic fight by the Worms to lose 2-3 to The Rodings Reserves. The 21st October saw a home victory against Tiptree Heath Reserves, with the final score being 2-1. This was followed recently by another home defeat after a very close game against Roman Rovers. They pinched a lucky second half goal to win 0-1.

On the 11th of November the reserves were away again against Boxford, and despite heroic attempts, a dramatic penalty in the 96th minute of the game meant a 2-1 loss for The Worms.

Better news on the 18<sup>th</sup>, away to Abby Fields first. At halftime the game was looking like an easy victory with us 3 up. But our opponents dug deep, with the final score being a victory to the worms 6 goals to 5.

Fixtures over December include Roman Rovers Reserves (away) and Great Bradfords first (away).

Wormingford Wanderers reserves is made up of players mostly under the age of 25. Professions amongst the team range from a chef to bricklayer to electricians, many of which work on a Saturday, sometimes making choosing a team a challenging prospect! It is often not until late on a Friday evening that I know if I have enough players to fulfil a fixture, failure of which will result in a fine by the FA. And if the Wormingford first team need our players to fulfil their fixture that is part of our function, meaning we often sacrifice our own success to ensure theirs. The poor start to the season is a combination of these factors, plus a sprinkling of poor luck! We're hoping to make some progress through the table in the coming weeks.

The 1914 Christmas Day truce in the Trenches



"love, is it not?

How the cup holds the tea,  
How the chair stands sturdy and foursquare,  
How the floor receives the bottoms of shoes  
Or toes. How soles of feet know  
Where they're supposed to be.  
I've been thinking about the patience  
Of ordinary things, how clothes  
Wait respectfully in closets  
And soap dries quietly in the dish,  
And towels drink the wet  
From the skin of the back.  
And the lovely repetition of stairs.  
And what is more generous than a window?



From *Another River: New and Selected Poems*

(Amherst Writers and Artists Press, 2005).

*How did Scrooge win the Christmas Football game?*

*The Ghost of Christmas 'passed'*