

THE *chaotic* NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

# THE VILLAGE HALL

The poster features a teal background with several light blue musical notes scattered around the title. The title 'THE VILLAGE HALL' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter 'i' in 'VILLAGE' is replaced by a stylized orange character that looks like a person with a round head and a long, thin body. The word 'HALL' is written in a smaller font size than 'VILLAGE'.

WRITTEN BY **RICHARD SYKES**  
EDITED BY **MARIA SYKES**

PRODUCED BY **WOODHOUSE MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY**  
AND **LAWRENCE BATLEY THEATRE**

*World Premiere*

**10 - 13 SEPTEMBER 2025**

LAWRENCE BATLEY THEATRE

Audition Pack  
**Helen Gorsage**

## **A very warm welcome to 'The Village Hall'...**

Thank you for your interest in being part of this unique show. As it's a premiere there aren't any reference points to go by when creating your character for the audition. Some find this 'freeing', some; find it 'utterly terrifying'. It's going to be staged in-the-round (see above 'freeing/terrifying' comment) with a 9-piece live orchestra and no click-tracks. It's as live, vibrant and exciting as we can make it and if its' predecessor 'By George' is anything to go by, the rehearsals and process of creating the residents of 'Cheeley Village Hall' will be hugely enjoyable. The entire production team are routing for you to give the best audition possible.



To help, you can find guide vocal files and backing tracks using this QR code, just view it through a smartphone camera and click the yellow link. You'll find a drive with an audition folder, a full script and demos. Please **download them before opening**. Any issues - contact rich@richsykes.com.

## **Précis**

Cheeley Village Hall and its committee are stretched to their limits when the keys disappear. A hasty rearrangement by determined committee treasurer Frances, sees the morning's missed activities scheduled alongside the afternoon's programme. Chaos and farce ensue, with battles for territory and power causing the villagers' secrets to be revealed – particularly when outsiders Helen and Ken stir things even further.

## **Cast of Characters**

<b>Rvd. Geoffrey Potts</b>	Cheeley Village church's vicar
<b>Melanie Potts</b>	The vicar's wife
<b>Frances Waring</b>	Committee treasurer and wife of Robert Waring
<b>Helen Gorsage</b>	Widow of Mollie
<b>Diana ('Di') Coombs</b>	Excitable secret partner of David
<b>David ('Dave') Goosham</b>	Excitable secret partner of Diana
<b>'Big' Ken Rushton</b>	Brash know-it-all from Stackworth,
<b>Jennifer Crump</b>	Lollipop lady for Cheeley Infants School
<b>Joan Blacker</b>	Dinnerlady at Cheeley Infants School

Other named characters include Gordon, Pam, Christine, Deidre, Dot, Freya and Carol. These will be part of multiple role company parts with a standard audition piece for all genders. If you'd like to be considered for a specific role, please let the panel know on the day of the auditions.

From all at LBT and Woodhouse Musical Theatre Company - the very best of luck.

## **Helen**

Helen arrived in Cheeley about a year ago. Her wife Mollie was terminally ill and they decided to find somewhere 'normal' where they could hide from the rest of the world. Mollie took to this approach, Helen didn't - but she decided to closet herself whilst she cared for Mollie. Mollie remained active, helping Frances run the village hall.

When Mollie dies, Helen returns the key Mollie had been trusted with through Frances's letterbox - not knowing what she's set in motion. She attends a yoga class on a wet Saturday afternoon and meets and ultimately confronts the committee members of Cheeley Village Hall and Parish Church who have difficulty accepting and trusting someone who Mollie had hidden so well.

Helen is the audience's empath. We discover the characters through her eyes. She is warm, well-meaning, but equally - is very observant and knows what's right. Helen rolls up her sleeves to help, but, her candour allows her to be far more influential than Mollie was - and perhaps change the people of Cheeley's lives for the better.

Helen's songs include:

**Whisper / Winter Sun** - this song showcases Helen's more confrontational, observant style as she explains why she won't require Mollie to have a church funeral. It also leads to the first appearance of the show's central theme - Winter Sun.

**Wherever I Hear Music** - an upbeat, inspirational song spearheaded by Helen and the Cheeley Valley Ladies Hockey Team.

**The Panto** - Helen takes on the role of Cinderella in the Cheeley Players' panto. It's the role Mollie had.

**This Is Why** - Winter Sun's theme is reprised in a duet with Frances.

**Winter Sun** - the emotional, rousing final number of the show - as Helen offers Frances a safe space to escape from her repressive home life.

Helen is enthusiastic, genuine and determined. Though Mollie's death is relatively recent, she is not showing signs of grief. She's the hero of the story, but her most important quality is her empathy.

**PIECE 1 - pg. 24-26**

**Mel** Oh Helen. It's so sad.

**Geoffrey** So sad.

**Mel** It was so quick.

**Music Cue:**  
**Whisper / Winter Sun (Geoffrey, Helen and Mel)**

**Geoffrey** So quick.

*Helen smiles a little and raises her eyebrows. Mel pushes Geoffrey forward.*

**Geoffrey** OFTEN THIS TIME, IS THE MOST WEARING  
VERY CONFUSING, AND OVERBEARING.  
TELLING THE WORLD, BAT'LING THROUGH RED TAPE  
IT'S ALL RATHER MESSY, IT'S ALL SUCH A HEADACHE  
AND THEN THERE'S THE HEARTBREAK...  
SO MUCH TO THINK OF, SO MUCH TO DO.  
SOME DON'T KNOW HOW TO GRIEVE. HOW ARE YOU?

*Geoffrey gestures to Mel for the church diary which she has in her pocket and hands it to him.*

THEY SAY TRADITION IS THERE TO PRESERVE US.  
SO WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE THE CHURCH FOR THE SERVICE?

*Geoffrey opens the diary at today's date and brandishes the pen which was used as a bookmark.*

**Helen** THERE'LL BE NO NEED. NO FUSS OR BOTHER

*Helen gently closes the diary. Geoffrey is understated, but visibly alarmed.*

WE CAN ALL GRIEVE IN ONE PLACE OR ANOTHER.

*Geoffrey holds his diary tightly and is insistent. Opening it again. Mel is insistent too – pushing Geoffrey forward again.*

**Geoffrey** SURELY THE CHURCH WOULD BE THE BEST VENUE  
THERE MOLLIE'S GOD CAN BID HER FAREWELL TOO

**Helen** OH... WHAT DID SHE TELL YOU?

EASY TO FEIGN FAITH. EASY TO LIE.  
HARDER TO NAY SAY, WHEN YOU'RE... OUTSIDE.  
BETTER TO BITE THE TONGUE. ONE LITTLE SIN.  
BETTER BELIEVE SO YOU BETTER FIT IN.

WHEN WE FIRST MET, SHE'D BE AFRAID TO  
HOLD HANDS OUTSIDE, SO WE JUST MADE DO.  
I'D SAY TO MOL, "COME ON. THIS IS ENGLAND"  
SHE SAID "I KNOW WHAT THEY'D ALL BE THINKING"  
"THERE'D BE NUDGING AND WINKING."  
"NOT QUITE THE TICKET." "NOT QUITE THE SAME."  
"THERE GO THE LESBIANS." "NO CHILDREN." "SHAME."  
WE WON'T NEED YOUR CHURCH AS WE BURY THE LIE.  
WE'LL WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN... AND I'LL WHISPER GOODBYE

*Music continues underscore.*

**Helen** No church funeral thank you. But we could still use the church for other things. Maybe do the line dancing in there, or the planting...?

**Mel** *(defensively)* Oh no. The heating isn't on.

**Geoffrey** Yes. It's far too cold. The pews can't be moved.

**Mel** They're about to be restored.

**Helen** I see. *(she casts him a smile)* That seems a bit of a shame, that beautiful, big building and no-one using it.

**Mel** Mmm. *(trying to get away)* Oh Geoffrey. Can I have a word about... hymn books?

*Mel drags a baffled Geoffrey away through the fire doors. Helen tests the table then sits on it, clutching her knees. The sunlight shoots through the windows again and the music reappears.*

*Helen recoils squinting. Then talks (Sprechgesang) to the light.*

**Helen** Alright. I'm here.  
I promised you I'd try it. And I wouldn't interfere...  
BUT AS I'M HERE.

I DON'T KNOW HOW,  
TO BE WHATEVER YOU WERE. I'M NOT HOLIER-THAN-THOU  
IT'S JUST ME NOW.

A DAY GOES BY, YOU STAND  
AND I FEEL THE BREATH OF MORNING AS YOU WARM THE LAND  
ENDLESSLY CONFORMING  
MOLLIE... TAKE MY HAND  
HOLD A CANDLE WHERE YOU SHONE.  
'CAUSE WE'VE ALL, LOST OUR WINTER SUN.

## **PIECE 2 - pg. 32-34**

*Helen and Frances find themselves alone in The Village Hall after the line dancing group have pushed their 'Cheeley in Bloom hanging basket planting' trestle table ignominiously into a corner. Frances takes the group's tea break in the kitchen as an opportunity to regain some space.*

**Frances** *(whispering to Helen)* Quick. Grab your end.

*Frances and Helen lift the trestle and reclaim some hall space by moving it a couple of metres towards the middle.*

**Helen** But they need the space.

**Frances** They can whistle – so do we.

**Helen** Mollie told me about those two. *(glancing to the kitchen)*

*Frances drops the table in place suddenly.*

**Frances** *(deadly serious)* You mustn't let them know you know.

*Helen pauses – not understanding. Frances continues potting.*

**Frances** Lips. Sealed. David fell in love with Di while the ink was drying on his decree absolute. He didn't want anyone seeing them together so quickly after the divorce. Tongues would wag. So... it became their little secret. The problem was - they couldn't keep their hands off each other. So soon we all knew. Everyone knew. But this is England. So nobody said anything.

*With the hanging baskets now ready for final planting, a hanging basket stand is moved close to the trestle table.*

**Helen** But if everyone knows – what’s the problem?

**Frances** Rule fourteen. “No fraternisation”. Di and David have become rather rule obsessed – probably because they’re breaking that one! But, they don’t know everyone knows. And if they knew everyone knew – well heaven knows. All the secrecy might be the only thing keeping them together. So. Lips. Sealed.

*They exchange a smile.*

They aren’t the only ones with secrets (*with a hint of barb*), are they?

*Frances fetches a step ladder from the room and places it close to the hanging basket stand.*

**Helen** No. Mollie’s decision. Not mine. We got the diagnosis and she said “I don’t want to think about it. I don’t want it to matter. I just want to be normal, for as long as I can.” – so we chose Cheeley. What could be more normal than this? And we became ‘normal’ too. We went back to stolen kisses and hidden glances. That crackle when our little fingers touched came back. Can’t deny – it was exciting. Maybe David and Di aren’t as daft as they seem.

**Frances** I wish you’d felt safe enough to come and enjoy the hall with her. Everyone’s invited.

**Helen** Being invited is different to being welcomed.

**PIECE 3 - pg. 76**

**Music Cue:**

**Wherever I Hear Music (Helen and Company)**

**Helen** You see. Look around you. This place is buzzing. What precious little action there is in Cheeley, it's all here. Theatre, dancing, community, music. This is inspiration.

MOLLIE SAID IN HERE  
THAT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR  
SHE WOULD HEAR THE CHEERY SOUNDS  
IT WOULD FILL HER HEART  
WHEN THE NOISE WOULD START  
SO THAT NOTHING BROUGHT HER DOWN  
THE ANGELIC WHOOP OF THE TODDLER GROUP  
AND THE KIDS' DEVIL-DAY-CARE  
WHEREVER I HEAR MUSIC YOU'LL BE THERE.

IT'S IN JENNY'S SIGH  
WHEN THE TEA URN'S DRY  
AND THE UHT IS LOW.  
IT'S WHEN JOAN'S HALF-COCKED  
'CAUSE THE TOILET'S BLOCKED  
AND THAT DRIPPING OVERFLOW  
YOU CAN HEAR THE BEAT  
OF THE SCRABBLING FEET  
WHEN THE BEETLE DRIVE CHANGE CHAIRS  
WHEREVER I HEAR MUSIC YOU'LL BE THERE.

IT'S IN YOU GEOFFREY,  
IN A EULOGY  
AND THE SNORING IN THE PEWS  
WHEN MEL TELLS HER CHOIR,  
"HOLD YOUR HYMNALS HIGHER  
LIKE YOU'VE NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE"  
WHEN KEN'S LETTING LOOSE,  
LIKE A HONKING GOOSE  
AND NO-ONE SEEMS TO CARE  
WHEREVER I HEAR MUSIC, YOU'LL BE THERE.



# Whisper / Winter Sun

16

Hln.

Gfy.

They say trad - t - tion is there to pre - serve\_ us so

18

Hln.

Gfy.

There'll be no need  
when would you like the church for the ser - vice?

**B**

21

Hln.

Gfy.

No fuss or both - er We can all grieve in one place or a - no - ther.

24

Hln.

Gfy.

Sure - ly the church would be the best ven - ue There

26

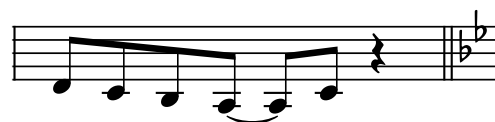
Hln.

Gfy.

— Moll - ie's God can bid her fare - well too.

(huh)

Reverting to one-line score.  
Helen sings all.



What did she tell\_ you?

29 **C**

Eas - y to feign faith Eas - y to lie.\_ Har - der to nay - say when

32

you're out - side. Bet - ter to bite the tounge. One lit - tle sin.\_

35 **D**

Bet - ter bel - ieve\_ so you bet - ter fit in. - When we first met\_

38

we'd be af - raid to hold hands out - side\_ so, we made do

41

I'd say to Mol: "Come on. This is Eng - land." She said: "I know - what

44

they'll all be think - ing. There'll be nudg - ing and wink - ing"

46 **E**

"Not quite the tick - et" "Not quite the same" "There go the les - bians"

49

"No child - ren." "Shame." We won't need your church As we

51

rall.....

bur - y the lie. — We'll wipe the slate clean as I whisp - er "Good

Nobilmente  $\text{♩} = 72$

6

bye." Al - right. I'm here.

9

I prom - ised you I'd try it. And I would - n't int - er - fere.

12

But as — I'm here... I don't know how, to

14

be what - ev - er you were. I'm not hol - i - er — than thou.

16

It's just me now. A day go - es by You stand and I

18

feel the breath of mor - ning as — you warm the land

20

End - less - ly\_\_\_ con - form - ing Mol - lie take my hand, hold a

22

can - dle where you shone. 'cause we've all lost our win - ter sun\_\_\_

# Wherever I Hear Music

Andantino ♩ = 92      ♩ = 148

Mol - lie said

13 A

\_\_\_ in here that through - out\_\_\_ the year she would hear the chee - ry sounds.

16

\_\_\_ It would fill\_\_\_ her heart when the noise\_\_\_ would start so that noth

19

- ing brought her down. — The an - gel - ic whoop of the tod -

22

- dler group and the kids' — Dev - il - Day - Care. Wher - ev - er I hear

25

mu - sic — you'll be the - re. It's in Jen -

31

- ny's sigh when the tea — urn's dry and the U. — H. T. is low.

34

— It's when Joan's — half - cocked 'cause the toi -

36

- let's blocked. And that drip - ping o - ver - flow. — You can hear

39

— the beat of the scrab - bling feet when the bee - tle drive change chairs.

42

Wher - ev - er I hear mu - sic — you'll be the - re.

**B**

47 **1**

It's in YOU\_Geof - frey, in a eu - lo - gy and the snor

51

- ing in the pews.\_ When Mel tells\_ her choir "hold your hym

54

- nals high'r, like you've noth - ing left to lose".\_ When Ken's let -

57

- ting loose like a honk - ing goose and no - one seems to care.

60 **6**

Wher - ev - er I hear mu - sic\_ you'll be the - re.