

# Community Groups

## Ashwell Village Trust

The Ashwell Village Trust exists to promote the permanent preservation, for the benefit of the general public and the inhabitants of the Parish of Ashwell, of lands or buildings of beauty or of historical interest, or of ecological or scientific importance within the Parish, and generally to protect and preserve the character and amenities of the Parish for the benefit of the public.

The Ashwell Village Trust is the charity set up in 1986 to replace the Hertfordshire Buildings Preservation Trust, in which the Cottage Garden was originally vested from its formation in 1968. The Trust is ultimately responsible for the Cottage Garden, which is admirably looked after by a group of volunteers who meet monthly. The Chairman of the Trustees is the Chairman of the Parish Council (at present Mark White). Two other Trustees are appointed from the Parish Council (at present Bridget Macey and David Sims). Five other Trustees are drawn from the village

## Ashwell Cottage Garden

2018 was another successful year with wonderful weather once the very cold spring was out of the way. I was surprised and very honoured to be asked to take over the role of volunteer leader from Liz Moynihan who after fifty years rightly considered she had earned her retirement, though she is still helping out. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Community Cottage Garden a garden party was held, acknowledging not only Liz's unstinting devotion to the garden but that of current helpers and past participants too. An exhibition of the history of the site was organised and set up in the Museum to celebrate their achievement. A fruit tree was planted in the garden to mark the event. I thank all those who organised and helped in putting it all together.

In addition, a cat seat was donated to the garden from the Whitby sisters and now has pride of place at the end of the garden. The cottage garden planting continues to flourish with colour and variety throughout the seasons. The volunteers have done a sterling job on keeping the weeds at bay and the more vigorous subjects in check, all helped by a welcoming cup of tea or coffee. The work has included a major trimming of the rear boundary where some of the larger shrubs and climbers had become overgrown.

To assist the Ashwell Museum Restoration Appeal Fund it is proposed to have a plant sale, garden book sale and coffee morning in June 2019 so members will be potting up any spare / unusual stock for the event. So, thank you to all those who have worked so hard on keeping the Cottage Garden in



Artist: Chrissy Harrison; Photo: by Margaret Budgen

such good shape. We are now looking forward to continuing in 2019.

If you have an hour to spare once a month new volunteers are always welcome to come and join us. Please contact me by 'phone or email to be added to the circulation list for receiving details of dates.

**Ken Coyne, Volunteer Coordinator**

☎ 743723

✉ kencoyn@hotmail.co.uk

## Moss Cottage Homes

The cottages were built in 1904 by George Moss in memory of his mother, Frances, and continue to provide homes for six of the older residents of Ashwell. The residents are independent and the cottages' location in the middle of the village gives them easy access to shops, churches, the surgery and all village facilities.

We were very sad this year to lose Gwen Pack, who was a resident for nine years. She is greatly missed.

During the year extensive maintenance tasks were undertaken and wired smoke alarms were installed. The electrical installations in all the cottages have been inspected and electrical equipment PAT tested.



Moss Cottages

Gwen's cottage will be completely refurbished and it is hoped that a new resident will have moved in by the time this report is published. The Trustees meet several times during the year to administer the six single-storey dwellings and an annual inspection also takes place.

Dr Rino Coladangelo, Andrew Gillborn (formerly Chairman), Susan Greenbank and David Price have retired as Trustees. We would like to thank them for the valuable contributions they have made. Madeleine Legg has taken over the Chair and new Trustees have been appointed. The current Trustees in alphabetic order are: Robert Evens, Cliff Jenkinson, Madeleine Legg (Chair), David Richards, Ann Robertshaw, Gaye Rowlands and Phillida Shaw.

Rosemary Pearch continues as Clerk to the Trustees.

**Rosemary Pearch** ☎ 742913

## Ashwell Patients' Group

The National Health Service continues to be under pressure at all levels, so any form of waste needs to be eliminated to enable our scarce resources to go as far as possible. One of the issues that concerned the Ashwell Patients' Group (APG) over the course of 2018 is the very high number of missed appointments at our two surgeries. In September alone these amounted to over ten hours of doctors' and nurses' time in Ashwell and around six hours at Bassingbourn. These absent patients denied appointments to many others who would have very willingly attended. So, if you book an appointment, please ensure that you attend or, if a problem arises, try to let the surgery know in good time so someone else can take your place. Our new telephone system gives you the opportunity of cancelling or re-arranging.

A great success in 2018 was the arrival of a blood pressure monitoring machine in our Ashwell surgery, enabling patients to check their blood pressure when convenient,

without appointment or queue. This was provided following a generous donation from a grateful patient. Indeed, it is proving such a boon that a similar machine has been installed in Bassingbourn from the practice's own funds.

We continue to strive to improve contact between patients and our medical professionals. APG members regularly raise issues of local and national concern and are pleased that Dr Jarvis, Mark Pilling (Practice Manager) and Linda Johnson (Office Manager) always attend our meetings and are swift to answer questions and provide information.

During 2018 we held only one health promotion talk, which was on the subject of cancer prevention. Those attending found the talk extremely informative and well presented. Items being considered for future events include dementia and arthritis.

The APG committee is made up of the following members: Dr Matt Jarvis, Mark Pilling and Linda Johnson representing the practice.

**Peter Chapman** (Chair) (Ashwell)

**Mike Pearch** (Ashwell)

**Harry King** (Hinxworth)

**Andrea Rowland** (Steeple Morden)

**Richard Williams** (Steeple Morden)

**Detlev Popp** (Guilden Morden)

**Tessa Cathcart** (Bassingbourn)

Our aim is to have all the villages covered by our practice represented, so we would welcome expressions of interest from patients living in Newnham, Litlington, Abington Pigotts and Kneesworth.

**Peter Chapman**

✉ peterchapman70@yahoo.co.uk

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Ashwell Housing Association owns ten properties in Back Street which were built in around 1979. We have two bungalows, four flats (one of which is a small studio flat) and four x three-bedroom houses. All are let to local people or those with very strong connections to the village. We have had

two changes of occupancy during the last 12 months – one of the bungalows has changed hands and we now have a new family in one of the three-bedroom houses.

I reported last year that we had split from Howard Cottage Housing Association and, although we are no longer part of their set up, we have a Service Level Agreement with them so they carry out all repairs and maintenance and provide a good management service for us. This arrangement is still working well.

We are acutely aware of the scarcity of affordable rented housing in the village which guarantees priority to local people and so we do keep a list of potential applicants and ask anyone who is interested in going on this list to fill out a simple form. If you would like further details, please contact our applications officer, Gill Field.

**Liz Fitzsimmons**, Chairman ☎ 742722

**Gill Field**, Applications Officer

✉ barry.gill@care4free.net

## Ashwell Archaeology

We have not done any test-pit digging this year, but have been very busy in other ways.

You may remember the henge monument that was excavated prior to the development of houses at Walkdens, alongside Ashwell Street. It was clear that there were several other archaeological features in the same area and there was a concern that any future development along Ashwell Street might damage them. It was noted that the henge is a very rare monument and was an unexpected find, so there may be other similar monuments close by. This spring, however, scheduling protection was granted. This area of the village, running along the line of the hills overlooking the Springs, is considered to be very significant and should certainly be carefully looked after.

We went to look at a well, which had opened up along Ashwell Street, towards the Mordens. It was brick capped, which probably means it was not very old, but interesting in any case. There is thought to have been a hamlet out here, and it's not far from some Roman activity, but the bricks were more modern. It has been filled in.

Ashwell at Home saw mixed weather. Our stall in St Mary's Church was a big hit with young people as there were mini-digs, an archaeological treasure hunt and an opportunity

to have your garden finds assessed. Some lovely pieces of pottery, an enamel badge and some very interesting chalk models were brought in. We will always try to give advice at the Museum if you do find anything interesting in your garden or on a walk.

In July we celebrated the publication of a glossy book, packed with information about Ashwell's very own Roman goddess, Senuna. People were eager to hear more about the finds and also their interpretation. It is so unusual to have a find from almost two thousand years ago where we know the name of the goddess, and also the name of some of her followers, who might well have lived in Ashwell, or visited here.

A group of volunteers meet regularly in the Museum to wash, sort and record the finds from test pits dug over the last few years. This very valuable work means that we can find out more about the pottery and other finds.

We are also at the early stages of an exciting project surveying the hill forts of the Chilterns. Look out for more information via Ashwell News and at the Museum.

Thank you very much to all those who have helped in any way this year.

**Sarah Talks** ✉ sarah@sarahtalks.me

## The Book Swap

Since the library service ceased to function in Ashwell the Book Swap facility has taken its place. St Mary's Church provides the Parish Room as the venue and, with a few volunteers, we are now well established. The service is free of charge and there is no signing in or out of books – if you have a book in good condition to swap just bring it along and exchange it for another. However, you do not even need to bring a book to swap in order to borrow one. But please do not bring boxes or bags full of books – keep those for the October Book Weekend.

The Book Swap is available during Post Office opening hours when Nick, who runs the post office counter, kindly puts out the book shelves. On the second Saturday of each month (check Ashwell Village News for any variation) between 10:00 am and noon there is a Book Swap Café when coffee, tea and biscuits (cake if you are lucky) for a mere 50p are on offer while you browse. This also provides an opportunity to discuss books you might recommend – or not. As an added attraction the Museum is also open on these Saturday mornings. Although not setting out to profit financially we have been able to make donations to Asheteria, the Junior Choir, St Vincent's Church in Hinxworth and to buy new tablecloths and a kettle for the Parish Room. None of this could happen without our volunteers so a big 'thank you' to them.

**Eileen ten Hove**

The armistice, which stopped hostilities at the end of the Great War in November 1918, was a moment of great rejoicing and relief. Four years of attrition had finished, leaving millions of deaths in their wake. For a time, there was a feeling of confidence, which quickly evaporated away as the reality of rebuilding a tired and exhausted country became apparent. How could men who came back from war be incorporated into the village they had left? One answer was to build centres or halls for the "benefit of the inhabitants without distinction of sex or of political or other opinions as a place of physical and mental recreation". Many halls in this area have plaques relating to this time.

Mrs Phyllis Fordham of The Bury in Ashwell was a major instigator of creating such a place for Ashwell, and she purchased the redundant maltings and brewery which now form the Village Hall from a local builder, John Bailey. Although Mrs Fordham was a major benefactor, the hall was not given entirely by her. The first set of accounts, dated 1921 to Dec 1923, shows that the village had to find £450 for the purchase of the hall and £50 to purchase a right of way to it. In the first accounting year, the village raised £322.15s.9½d, a considerable sum when farmworkers' weekly pay was £1.4s.0d (£1.20). Two baths were installed at one end of the building. They were available for use on Tuesdays and Fridays and cost 2d (0.8p). Mrs Belinda Ely was the last caretaker whose task it was to light the coal boiler on the appropriate days to provide hot water. In the first year the income from baths was £5.12s.6d (£5.65), which works out at 678 baths taken.

The hall is still used by the village (though the baths have long since gone). In local authority terms, the Village Hall has a footfall of about 15,000 people per year. When looked at in these terms, you can see the importance of making repair and maintenance budgets to allow for that number of people.

At the moment, building work is up to date, but with a building built in around 1880 it is wise to be prudent in case of emergencies. This is why the users' committee has built up a fund of £30,000 for such contingencies. The cash fund belongs to the users' committee (correctly known as The Ashwell Youth and Community Centre). This is important because the trusteeship of the Village Hall is to be taken over by the Ashwell Parish Council. Under the original copy of the constitution, it is the users' committee that has the responsibility of running and maintaining the hall.

Although the Village Hall is a busy place, there are still some time slots available for hire, for both regular and occasional events. I would like to thank Rosemary and Michael Pearch for their diligence in organising the running of the premises, and Ken Hull for his efforts in maintaining the Hall over many years. The hall can be booked by contacting Rosemary.

**Sam Wallace**, Chairman of Trustees and Users' Committee

**Mike Pearch**, Joint Treasurer

**Rosemary Pearch**, Joint Treasurer, Secretary and Bookings Secretary ☎ 742913 ✉ rosypearch@live.com  
**Martin Hoffman**, **Jill Powell**, **Christine Schwick**, Trustees

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