



ASHWELL YEARBOOK 2021

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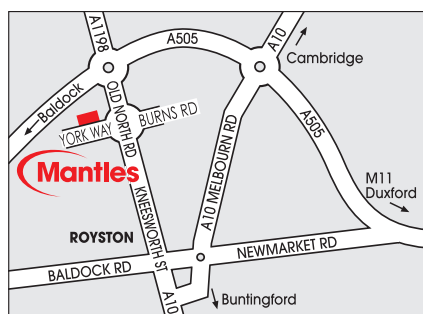


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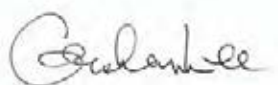
ASHWELL YEARBOOK 2021

Welcome to the 2021 edition of the Ashwell Yearbook.

This year's Ashwell Yearbook understandably differs from most previous editions because the activities of so many local groups have been affected, some quite seriously, by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Nevertheless, the Yearbook Working Group has sought to bring you a stimulating edition that includes and celebrates some of the many Ashwell based individuals and service providers who contribute to our unique and much-loved village.

As always, the Parish Council would like to thank all the members of the Yearbook Working Group and other contributors for producing such a quality publication. I would also like to thank Norton Mahy who has led the Group, and Cliff Jenkinson in particular, both of whom have contributed so much to help create this edition in such challenging times.

We would also like to thank the many Ashwell based businesses, and other businesses that provide a service to Ashwell, for advertising in this issue. It's been a difficult year for them all in one way or another, and yet despite that they have paid to advertise, which makes a huge contribution to the viability and quality of the Yearbook. In a year when we have all been urged to minimise our contact with others outside our household, the local service providers have been exceptionally important. It demonstrates just how much we need them and vice versa. Ashwell would be a much less attractive place to live in without the range of services available. So please use them to avoid risking losing them. This Yearbook acts as a valuable reference book for both the services available locally, and also the activity groups in the village, all of which contribute to the Ashwell community.



Graham Lee

Chairman

Ashwell Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Current Covid restrictions mean that again there will be no Annual Parish Meeting at the end of March, as once was usual. A meeting will be scheduled when restrictions are relaxed and it is safe to have one.

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Front Page: Lock Up in Lockdown.

Disclaimer: Any views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and are not to be taken as representing the views of the publishers, Ashwell Parish Council.

ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL



Chairman's Report

I'd like to start by thanking Mark White for his many years of holding the position of Chairman for the Parish Council. For personal reasons, he decided to stand down at the September AGM but continue as a Parish Councillor. As a councillor myself for several years, I appreciated Mark's approachable and consensual style of leadership. While I aim to echo those qualities, like Mark I have been aware of the declining numbers of Parish Councillors over the last ten years. This is not unique to Ashwell but common across North Hertfordshire and I suspect other districts. It is partly a reflection of the increasingly busy lives we all now lead, making us feel we can't spare the time to offer our expertise to the community we live in. But I also have the feeling that some people may not fully understand what the Parish Council does, or how much or indeed how little time is actually required from Parish Councillors.

So, I see one of my objectives as improving the communication and understanding of what we do, and how important our role is in local democracy. Without your Parish Council our District Council (NHDC) and County Council (Hertfordshire County Council) would take decisions and act on matters of potential importance for Ashwell with far less consultation with our community than they do now.

Another key objective of mine is to widen and improve the age, gender and experience mix of Parish Councillors by co-opting willing village residents on to the Council between elections, as well as others who would prefer to contribute as non-elected members of Working Groups. So, if you have questions or views about what happens in the village, or wish to enquire

about how you might be able to get involved, do please contact any of the councillors, Jane Porter our Clerk, or me, and we will listen and aim to provide an answer.

One of the key activities of the Council for some years has been the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Ashwell. Its key aim is to provide a set of Policies and Action Targets which respect national and NHDC policies in regard to housebuilding and community services, but tailor those policies in such a way that they reflect the unique needs of Ashwell. It has been a complex and challenging project, but it is now in its final stages. By the time this Yearbook is printed we hope that our Plan is either in the hands of a Government Inspector (whose role is to check that our proposed plan is sound) or that the Inspector has approved it to go to a local Ashwell referendum. If approved by the Inspector, the referendum could happen by mid-2021, pandemic permitting. The referendum will ask whether Ashwell Parish residents accept or reject the Neighbourhood Plan.

So, to sum up, please appreciate that this is your Village and by getting involved you can contribute to the quality of village life. That involvement can be formal, informal, a question or comment (positive or negative), and take just a minute or as much time as you feel you can spare. Everyone has a valid view and individual expertise. The Parish Council touches every part of village life and services. Help us to help you.

Please do take these words to heart. We will be delighted to hear from you if you think you can contribute.

Graham Lee

Chairman, Ashwell Parish Council



Elected Parish Councillors



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Aerial view of Ashwell Village. Photo by Paul Waby.



Parish Council information

To access current information concerning the Parish Council and the Ashwell community, or to sign up to receive regular email updates on specific items of interest, please visit the Ashwell website: www.ashwell.gov.uk. To sign up for the updates, go to the foot of the webpage.

Alternatively, contact the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Chairman or individual councillors.

All are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and there is an opportunity to speak in the 'Open Forum'. Meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month and start at 8:00 pm. Formerly the meetings were in the Parish Room but they have been on Zoom from May 2020. Members of the public who have signed up via the website, or any others who request, will be emailed a link with logon details. Our District Councillor, Tom Tyson, and County Councillor, Steve Jarvis, are also invited and routinely attend.

Council meetings are minuted as soon as possible after they have taken place and draft minutes are put on to the website. An archive of approved past minutes can also be found there. Every month a summary of the Parish Council meeting appears in the 'Parish Council Matters' section of the Ashwell

Village News. Copies of this summary are also displayed on the main Parish Council notice board by the Rose and Crown and on the small Parish Council notice board in the bus shelter in Station Road, opposite the War Memorial.

If important issues arise newsletters are published and delivered to every household.

Parish Council Representatives and Trustees on Other Bodies

Cllr Gemma Allan liaises with Ashwell Primary School and reports to and from the Parish Council on relevant matters as needed.

Cllr Martin Hoffman is the Chairman of the Trustees of Ashwell Village Museum in his own right and reports to and from the Parish Council on relevant matters as needed.

The Chairman, **Cllr Graham Lee**, is the representative of the Parish Council in matters relating to the Village Hall.

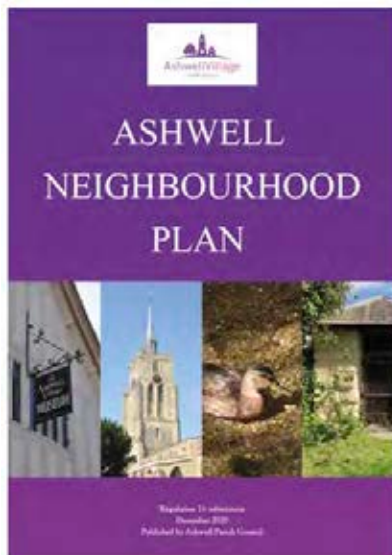
Cllr Graham Lee is also Chairman of the Ashwell Village Trust. The Trust owns the Cottage Garden, which is managed by a group of volunteers (see page 21 for report).

Local Government Responsibilities

Who does what and whom to contact?

The three tiers of local government – Parish, District and County – supply most of the services provided in towns and villages. For details of services provided by Ashwell Parish Council please see pages 7-15, for North Hertfordshire District Council please see pages 18,125 and for Hertfordshire County Council please see pages 17,125.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?



What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan is new type of plan, introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans are prepared by the local community and can include planning policies. The policies must be consistent with national and local planning policies and cannot be used to prevent development.

What influence does a Neighbourhood Plan have?

Following consultation, an examination and a successful referendum, a neighbourhood plan will become part of the statutory development plan and will be used when determining planning applications.

More information can be found on the NHDC website:
<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning>

Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan

2020 has seen considerable progress towards completing the six-year-long creation of Ashwell's Neighbourhood Plan.

In July, August and September 2020 the village residents were invited to complete a Consultation Questionnaire on the policies and aims as detailed in the second iteration of the Plan. This Consultation formed part of the Regulation 14 process that is a key stage required by the Localism Act. At the same time statutory consultees (including NHDC, Historic England, Environment Agency etc) were consulted on the Plan. A total of 106 responses were received from Ashwell residents, with 97% fully supporting the Plan.

As a result of the Consultation, a number of relatively minor revisions were made to the Plan and a full statement detailing the consultation process and outcomes was prepared to enable the Plan and all associated documents to be passed to NHDC for the Regulation 16 process to take place. Regulation 16 is managed by NHDC and involves the Plan being assessed by a Government Inspector. If approved, the completed Plan is then put to Ashwell Parish residents in the form of a referendum to seek approval or rejection. At the time of writing the moratorium on elections remains the limiting factor on the time plan but a referendum in June 2021 may be possible.

An immense amount of work has been carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group during the lifetime of the project. Particular mention and thanks should be extended to David Short, who led the project for the Parish Council through to 2019 and to Cllr Norton Mahy who has helped me in the final 12 months.

Cllr Graham Lee

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A Greener Ashwell

Ashwell Parish Council has for many years been concerned with tree and hedge protection. We are members of the Woodland Trust, share a link to the Cambridgeshire County Council's tree warden scheme, and liaise with the recently formed Greening Ashwell group.

In 2018/2019, when the Parish Council became aware of the planning application opposite Philosophers Gate, a former planning officer for Bedfordshire Council and I submitted an application for Tree Preservation Orders, fully supported with maps and plans etc, to NHDC. We expressed our concerns over the trees and bats in the Townsend Close sheep field and the large trees along the Ruddy. We were not successful in that case but we continue to request retention and protection of trees and hedges in all planning applications.

On our Parish land we have planted a new hedge and a number of trees at Small Gains, adjacent to the allotments. This was funded by a claim made by the Parish Council on the developers of the four new houses in Lucas Lane, opposite the Recreation Ground. A large chestnut tree had been removed against our wishes and the wishes of many local residents who supported the case. Despite all our efforts, and the support of the NHDC officer, two independent tree surgeon reports recommended removal on safety grounds.

We have some funds available for more tree planting in Ashwell and this will be progressed as suitable sites become available. Not all 'public' land is suitable for tree planting as ecological factors, highway safety etc have to be taken into

account. Residents of the village could help with greening by planting trees and bushes on their land where possible and also by retaining what we already have.

Cllr David Sims

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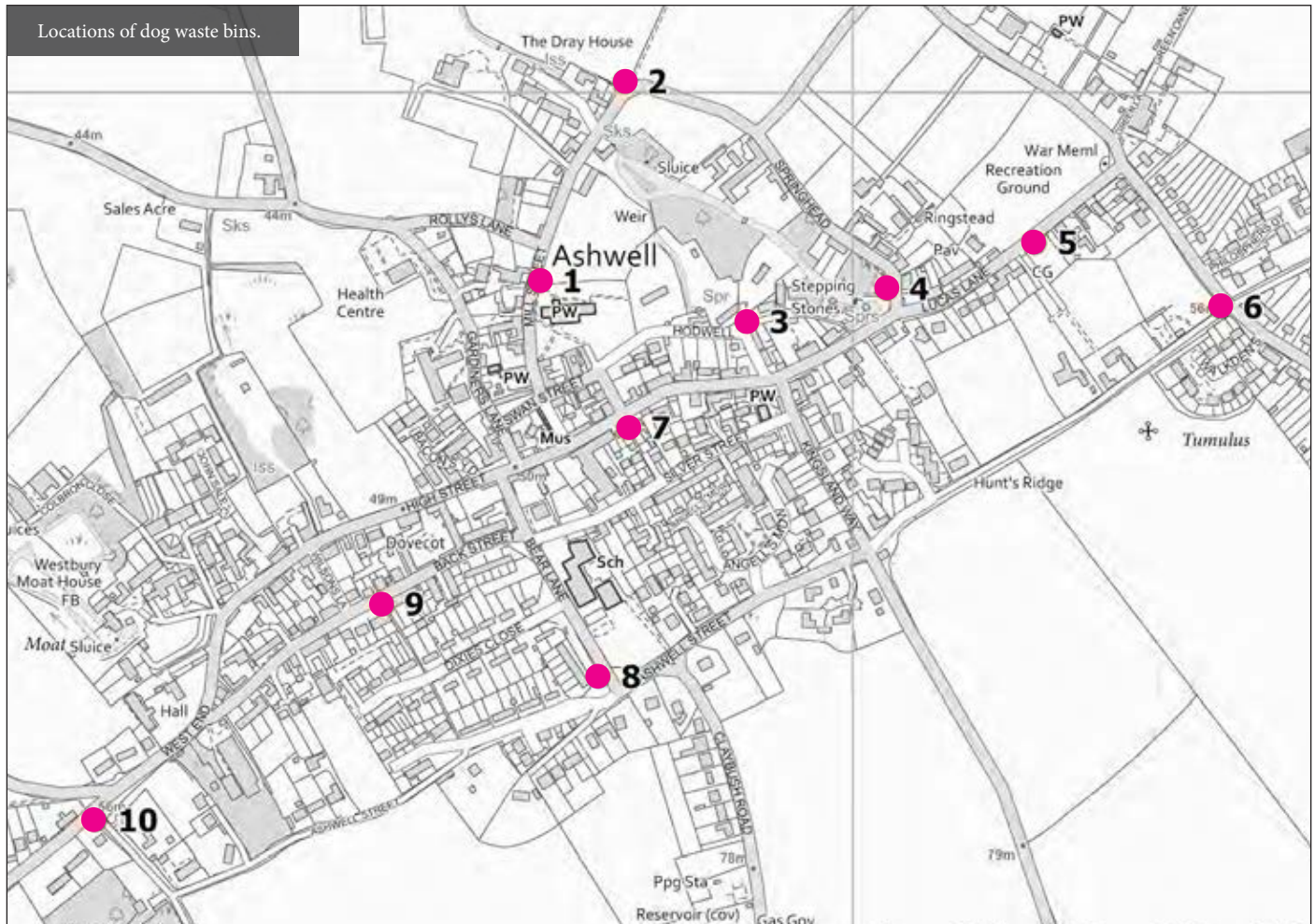
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Keeping Ashwell Tidy and Attractive

Covid restrictions meant that regrettably we had to cancel the Ashwell Spring Clean litter pick in 2020. That was a shame because it is always a great chance to get out in the improving weather after a long winter and do something constructive. It has a sociable aspect too and, of course, the village benefits. At the time of writing, it is still not clear whether there will be a litter pick in the Spring of 2021.

Martin Hoffman mentions the summer influx of visitors to the Springs in his report and it is worth acknowledging here the good work of our Environmental Cleansing Operative and Grounds Maintenance Officer who had to deal with mounting levels of rubbish left lying around, including soiled nappies.

As usual, this article is going to finish with a reminder about the litter bins. Please do not put dog waste or soiled nappies in them because they are only emptied once every four weeks. There are ten bins for dog waste and the map shows where they are.

- 1 Mill Street by the kissing gate to the Churchyard
- 2 Mill Street by the entrance to Elbrook Meadow
- 3 Hodwell at the end of the path to the Springs
- 4 Springhead by the entrance to the Springs
- 5 Lucas Lane opposite the recreation ground
- 6 Corner of Ashwell Street and Station Road
- 7 Bottom of the twitchel opposite the dentist, High Street
- 8 Top of Bear Lane on green opposite Chalk Bank Close
- 9 Foot of the twitchel from Dixies Close to Back Street
- 10 Partridge Hill junction with Newnham Way

CIlr Norton Mahy

Sign up for regular information
about the village at
www.ashwell.gov.uk



Ashwell Cemetery. Image from Ashwell Parish Archives.

Arbury Banks

This year the number of people walking around the Iron Age Hill Fort at the top of Arbury Banks was hugely increased by necessity because of lockdown, and this has stimulated much increased curiosity.

The Chilterns Board have continued with their main survey project 'Beacons of the past: Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape' with the use of aero investigations, taking pictures etc, and this part of the project has now finished the LiDar Survey. Think of this like radar or sonar - I can hear experts cringing at my very oversimplified explanation! Work is proceeding, analysing the data from the project, which started at the far end of the Chiltern Hills and ended in Ashwell at the top of Partridge Hill.

There are still spaces for volunteers to help carry out this analysis, with training offered to teach people how to carry this out and what to look for. Please contact the Parish Council office if you are interested in helping.

The head of this project is Edward Peveler, and it would be excellent if we were able to invite/persuade him to come and talk in Ashwell (and in due course perhaps interest the children at the school, subject to advice from the Headmaster). You can also look on the website: www.chilternsaonb.org

Have a look when taking a break passing the area where the Fort is situated – yes, I know it has a fence around it! - where you can see variations in the layout where the Fort is covered. Then imagine

what an advance it would be to actually be able to use modern technology to see exactly what 'our' Fort really looked like, as well as others along the chain. Need I say more?

Cllr Martin G. Hoffman

Ashwell Cemetery

The Parish owns the Cemetery in Station Road. It is managed and maintained by the Parish Council who employ a regular contractor for grounds maintenance and commission tree works as necessary. There is space for both full burials and the interment of ashes. Preferential rates are charged for parishioners and for those who have previously lived here. For interments or the reservation of plots, please contact the Parish Council office. Details are also on the website www.ashwell.gov.uk

The Chapel of Rest is available for small services through the tenant, Neville Funeral Service, who lease it from the Parish Council. Following their recent redecoration of the building and the refurbishment of the original Arts and Crafts furnishings, the chapel makes a suitable venue for those wishing to hold both a small service and an interment at the Cemetery. Please contact Neville's for details (see their advertisement on page 16).

Members of the Parish Council are always pleased to receive suggestions or observations to help us in the management of the Cemetery. Please contact the Parish Clerk.

Jane Porter, Parish Clerk ☎ 743706 ✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

Recreation Ground, Pavilion, Children's Playground and Public Toilets

As 2020 dawned we were full of excitement, with the promise of a year to fulfil our dreams of bringing about the improvements the children had asked for to the children's playground. Alas, that-which-must-not-be-named came and our plans were scuppered. That is not to say we have not tried. It is simply that the grants we needed were no longer available, with funds being understandably diverted to more urgent needs.

In the meantime, we were delighted to re-open the playground in the early summer in line with government regulations. We added hand sanitiser and a new twice-weekly cleaning rota to ensure the facilities were Covid-secure. And it was with pleasure that we were able to welcome back young and old to blow away the cobwebs and enjoy the great outdoors.

So it is, with all fingers crossed and black cats shooed away from walking under ladders, that we hope and pray for a more favourable 2021. The plans are simply on hold and, as soon as we are in a position to restart, we shall. We still have grand plans for a mini Multi-Use Games Area and additional equipment geared towards our older children, as well as a much anticipated and much needed new pavilion.

Fear not, Ashwell. We have a passionate team in place who are raring to go. In the last year so much has happened which is clearly so much more important than playgrounds and cricket, but once the dust has settled and we can see clearly over the fog of pandemic, the team will be there to start anew. Keep rubbing those rabbit feet and finding those four-leaf clovers!

Cllr Gemma Allan

Public Rights of Way - Footpaths

In living memory never have we used and appreciated so much the network of footpaths in and around Ashwell. The lockdowns imposed by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have stimulated many more people to use them. The Parish Council's website (www.ashwell.gov.uk) now contains a list of walking routes through and around Ashwell created by Parish

Councillor Norton Mahy, with detailed guides for each walk. You can copy or print these as you wish. During the course of the year the Parish Council has taken specific action to create, preserve or maintain the following footpaths and rights of way:

Hunt's Close (field between the Ashwell St / Ruddery and Lucas Lane). The developer acting for the owners of this site made a formal application to NHDC to build 24 houses with vehicular access from the Ruddery. This risked a widening of the BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) between Woodforde Close and the site entrance and a significant increase in the number of vehicles using the BOAT. This application was recommended for refusal by the Parish Council and was subsequently refused by NHDC on 19th November 2020. The Parish Council's preference was and remains to ensure that the Ruddery, part of the ancient Icknield Way, is kept as a rural, unmetalled, tree-lined track for the primary benefit of pedestrians.

Partridge Hill. There was significant damage to the right of way from 4-wheel off-road vehicles seeking somewhere to do 'donuts'. The vehicles were gaining access via the Bygrave Road by the ruined flint farmhouse. The Parish Council liaised with the local Police and Herts County Council to intervene and repair the damage. The farmer affected by the damage has also undertaken to help to keep the affected footpaths in good shape.

Pedestrian / Cycle Path to Ashwell & Morden Station. The Parish Council is supporting the proposal to create a footpath extension to the station. This requires Herts County Council and Cambs County Council to liaise over the plan and for the landowner to provide a right of way with safe separation from the roadway

For details of access to public rights of way throughout Hertfordshire, use the following link: [Webmaps - Rights of Way \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](http://Webmaps - Rights of Way (hertfordshire.gov.uk)). Zoom in via your mouse to access Ashwell footpaths or those in the rest of Hertfordshire.

In general, the Parish Council has good communications with the County Council's officer for Rights of Way (called the Countryside Access Officer), particularly in respect of various specific works such as surface repairs and the cutting back of vegetation which the County Council is responsible for undertaking.

Any Ashwell resident with concerns re Public Rights of Way in Ashwell can contact the Parish Council or HCC directly using their 'Report a Fault' page.

Cllr Graham Lee

The Springs.

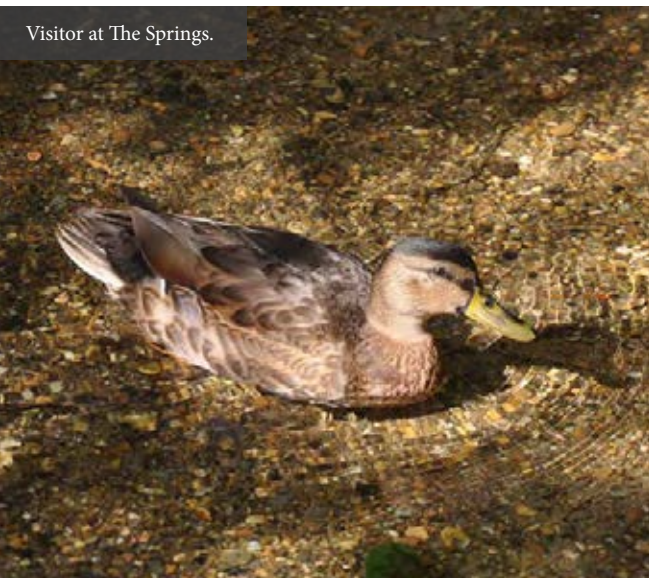


The Springs

One thing I can be certain about regarding the attendance at the Springs earlier in the year (owing to ‘national serious issues’) is that during the 10,000 years of its existence, never have so many people visited the site day after day!

Most came from outside of the village as it was an accessible area, not affected by enforced national closure, and it was well advertised on social media.

Visitor at The Springs.



I saw very few local families there and, with the huge increase of visitors, came a vast addition of rubbish, despite our massive removal efforts. Those living near the area had problems of access in and out of their driveways. The police have been incredibly helpful. The site could be closed in exceptional situations but, because of the rights of way that run through it,

this would have to be done through the County Council and would not be flexible.

The flow rates continued to be good, and I always remind you that as we are an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), with a special arrangement with the Environmental Agency, these rates are guaranteed to be maintained.

The regular annual safety inspections, carried out by a specialist company, revealed no significant issues which reflects well on the way the area is managed. We rely heavily on our enthusiastic volunteers who care for the flora and fauna. New people are always welcome to join the working parties. Without them we would be in great difficulties. The trees are inspected and cared for by a professional company and this is particularly essential with the increase in Ash Dieback disease. Whilst there is no agreed way of dealing with this, we continue to take guidance from experts. The safety of those visiting the Springs is paramount.

As I have mentioned often before, the area is not a ‘pretty garden’, which is why some areas are left rough. Visitors certainly appreciate this. However, we endeavour to allow access where it is safe, as well as wheelchair access as far as is possible in such an environment.

The red wall at the north end, which serves no useful purpose (it was part of one of the old breweries) was particularly ‘disturbed’ in the busy time and we are awaiting a quotation to remove it and for works to the fencing along the boundary with the cottages at the back of The Three Tuns.

Yes, a very different year from normal!

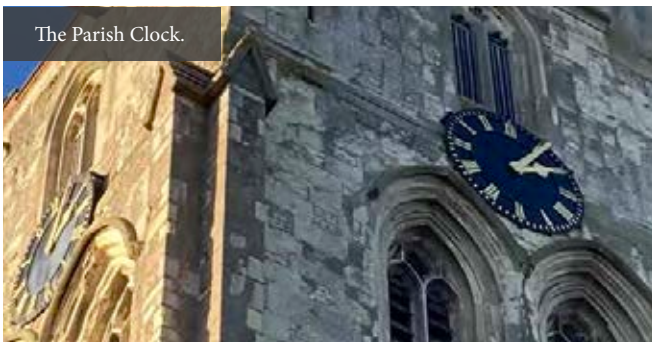
Cllr Martin G. Hoffman



The Small Gains Allotments. Photo by David Sims.

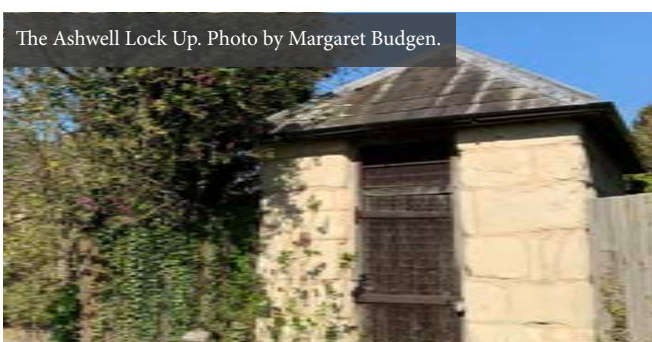
The Parish Clock

The Parish Council is responsible for the clock on the church tower.



Ashwell Lock Up

As can be seen from this year's front cover, this quaint reminder of Ashwell's history, constructed of local stone, still stands in good order. Our grounds maintenance officer looks it over occasionally to ensure all stays well and we now have a handsome new plate telling the Lock Up's history to replace the all but illegible one that had been in place for some years.



Small Gains Allotments

The seasons tend to be following a pattern of too much rain or too much sun, making it difficult for plot holders to grow vegetables and fruit. But, looking on the bright side, we made many improvements in 2020. We have a better track to drive down, following the recent repairs, a new post-and-rail fence for improved security, and a new hedge and trees, which will visually improve the site and help Ashwell Parish Council do its bit for greening the village.

Allotment membership is full, with four people on the waiting list, but plot vacancies can change quickly so it's always worth asking if any plots are free. Please contact the Parish Clerk Jane Porter ☎ 743706, or David Sims ☎ 742151.

Cllr David Sims

If you would like to see your organisation's report and photographs in the next edition of the Ashwell Yearbook then, before the end of November 2021, please contact:

Parish Council Office
☎ 743706 or
✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

St Mary's Churchyard.



St Mary's Churchyard

As the Churchyard is 'closed for burials' the Parish Council has a legal requirement to take over responsibility and does continuous work on grounds maintenance. The scaffolding, ladders etc are plain for all to see, but this work on the building is carried out by the Church and has nothing to do with the Parish Council. The Council has nothing to do with the graves and tombs either. Curiously, it is not responsible for the lych gate! The Parochial Church Council (PCC) look after these.

The grass is cut regularly (depending upon the rate of growth) by a chosen contractor and the trees, some of which are massive, are examined by a professional company on a very regular basis. Dealing with such strong, powerful trees can be a very expensive procedure which is why there is a 'decent' amount in reserve for such an occurrence. This can vary between removing big branches and on occasion large parts of the trees as they are becoming incredibly old.

There is a very good relationship between these two companies as well as the Parish Council and the PCC, which makes for excellent teamwork amongst all.

If you look from the path towards the main entrance to the Church, you will see an area where extra grass cutting has been carried out and this is the start of 'Biodiversity of Church land', the idea of which originates from the Diocese who wish to encourage a spread of 'living churchyards'. This is an initiative of the Parish Council and is led by a parishioner, Kate Haddock. Already some very small plants are in situ but little will be seen until the spring. The condition of the boundary wall in Mill

Street is regularly checked. Many people walk through the Churchyard, and this is to be encouraged, but we hope care will be taken regarding dog waste and the dumping of leaves!!

Cllr Martin G. Hoffman

War Memorial

The village started thinking about our Edwin Lutyens designed memorial in 1919 and it was built in 1921. So, this year will record its centenary and there will be a longer article about it in the next Yearbook.

We are naturally proud of what the memorial stands for and want to present it as well as possible. The Parish Council and Ashwell Branch of the Royal British Legion work together to maintain it. One volunteer, Craig Langford, deserves much credit for tending the ornamental planting and for keeping it looking lovely with regular refreshes since 2012. The Parish Council had the background hedge replanted two years ago.

Tree maintenance and regular mowing further contribute to the overall look.

Cllr Norton Mahy

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Edwin Lutyens's War Memorial reaches its centenary year in 2021.

The Parish Council Budget For 2021-2022

Summary

The headline for the 2021-2022 budget is that there will be no increase in the precept. In theory that means no change to what you pay to the Parish as part of your council tax, but other variables (such as the number of homes in single occupation) will have an effect.

Covid and the lockdowns have already had some small impact on our finances and will continue to do so next year as well. However, after applying a lot of thought to budget plans in uncertain times, the Parish Council has balanced its best assessment of necessary spending increases against matching reductions in outgoings and contributions to our reserves.

What the budget covers

In 2021-2022 the Parish Council plans to spend £90,380. The big picture is that we will continue to provide Ashwell with the usual facilities and services, subject to the inevitable restrictions that go with the times.

The articles on preceding pages illustrate how we have done this in the current year and the immediate future will be similar. Ashwell Parish owns the Recreation Ground, the Springs, the Cemetery and the allotments at Small Gains. For St Mary's Church we maintain the clock and Churchyard. There are grants to local organisations such as the Museum.

We work with the District Council and the County Council to make Ashwell's interests heard and we contribute financially to enhance routine street cleaning and some highways initiatives.

Looking forward, we aim to build a new pavilion on the recreation ground. It will be costly - in excess of £400,000 - but much of that is expected to come from grants in one form or another.

Changes in comparison with last year

The amount the Parish plans to spend each year does not always match income raised. In some years there will be large items that only crop up occasionally and expenditure will exceed income. Then we take money from our reserves. Overall, a balance is maintained because in years when there are no 'big ticket' items it makes sense to put aside sums as a contingency for the future and that is what we have done. It means that the charge we make to you via the precept does not fluctuate wildly from year to year.

In 2021 – 2022 there will be a number of these 'big ticket' items that are somewhat out of the ordinary:

- Loss of income from the Recreation Ground and pavilion (+£3,400). This is a casualty of Covid and there is no clear idea of when the situation will return to normal. So, the Council has assumed the worst, i.e. that we will have no income in the coming year.
- Support for the Village Hall (+£2,000). Although there will be no changes in the day-to-day running of the Hall, the Parish Council will become the custodian trustee for the trust that owns the property. There are legal costs involved in setting up this arrangement and we have put a sum in the budget based on the quote obtained.

- Donations to village organisations (+£1,200). Provisions have been included for the Museum and the Parish Church, which makes its room available to the Post Office.
- Other costs expected to be one-offs (+£3,400). These are sums set aside for the Yearbook's net cost, the water supply at Small Gains allotments, the Neighbourhood Plan, future highways projects and small community grants, if considered desirable.

There are also the inevitable general cost increases. We expect the main ones to be:

- Small pay awards for Parish Council staff, including employer national insurance and pensions (+£1,200).
- Other general cost increases (+£2,200). These are mostly for cleaning, trade waste, repairs to Council property, grounds maintenance and works to trees and hedges.
- Additional maintenance to the grassed bank in Silver Street (+£750).

The increases are largely cancelled out by equivalent reductions in contributions to earmarked reserves because in past years we have already set aside sums to support the following projects:

- Progressing the new pavilion (-£5,000)
- Tree works in St Mary's Churchyard (-£4,000)
- Major buildings maintenance (-£1,000)
- Playground equipment (-£2,500)
- Potential work to the Parish Clock (-£1,000)

The good news is that, when all these changes are taken together, it turns out that the amount we have to take out of our general reserve this year is only £800.

The charts below are an at-a-glance guide to where the money will come from and go to in order for the Parish Council to function in 2021 – 2022.

Accounting and audit

Once again, the Parish Council has received a clean bill of health following the external auditors' examination of our financial returns for the last complete year, April 2019 to March 2020.

Further information

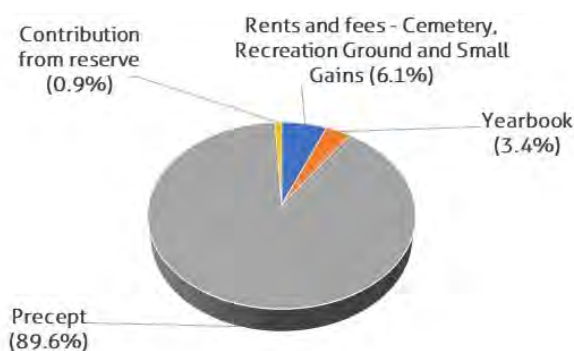
Being both accountable and transparent, the Parish Council makes its accounts and supporting details available to the public. For further information you can go the website <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/> or contact the Clerk, Mon-Thurs between 09:00 and 13:00 at:

The Parish Council Office at Bear Farm,
6a Back Street, SG7 5PE.

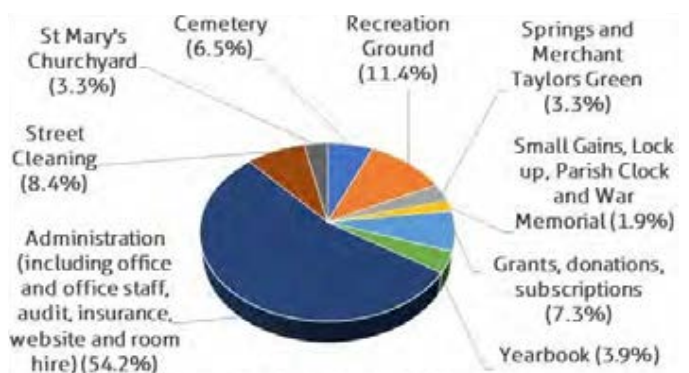
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Income and Reserve Contribution - Total £90,380



Expenditure - Total £90,380





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Hertfordshire County Councillor's Report



For all of us 2020 was a year unlike any other and we all experienced many changes to our lives. Although most of these changes were responses that will come to an end with the pandemic, some will lead to permanent alterations in our ways of working.

At the start of the pandemic the County Council shut down many of its operations, including holding Council meetings, and moved staff to work in areas that supported vulnerable people. Gradually ways were found to restart more normal activities with work on roads resuming and catching up with the backlog of maintenance and repairs. The majority of the Council's staff worked from home for most of 2020 and it is now expected that many will continue to do so on a permanent basis, saving money and cutting the environmental impact of commuting. Holding meetings by Zoom or similar has also saved the Council more than £1 million in travel expenses across the year – which is money that can now be spent on other things.

I am pleased that we have made some progress with local highways issues, including the 20mph speed limit in much of the village and agreement of a scheme that should slow traffic coming into the village at West End. This should be built in March and April 2021 and will, I hope, allow us to extend the 20mph limit slightly. I had hoped that the rules for 20mph limits would be changed, allowing further extensions to be made to cover Station Road, but unfortunately at the time of writing these changes have been blocked by the administration at the County Council.

My efforts to get improvements to the A505 junctions have continued and it now seem likely that work on the Litlington junction will be done during 2021-22. By the time you read this some 'interim' work, consisting of signs, repainting white lines and cutting back vegetation should have been done at both the Slip End and Ashwell Station junctions. It is not enough, but is a small step in the right direction.

The Council has adopted a 'Sustainable Hertfordshire' strategy with the aim of cutting the Council's carbon emissions, improving air quality and biodiversity as well as dealing with some of the inevitable impacts of climate change. Increased rainfall is one of those impacts, with hundreds of locations where there was flooding in the summer, including some in Ashwell. The County Council is responsible for investigating these and finding solutions, although this often involves other land owners taking action. Locations in West End and Hodwell are being looked at as part of this process.

On a more positive note, I have managed to persuade the Council to change the way in which it cuts some roadside verges, where this is now done in a way which promotes growth of native species.

Please get in touch if you want to know more or if there are issues that you think I might be able to help with.

Steve Jarvis, County Councillor

✉ steve.jarvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk

☎ 07815 887 375

📌 www.stevejarvis.org.uk



Changes in the County Council's maintenance methods this year have produced really good results.

North Hertfordshire District Councillor's Report



In this most difficult of years the District Council has had to embrace change and we have all grown used to being part of an online workplace and participating in virtual meetings.

As the lockdown was imposed in the spring, it became clear that many vulnerable members of our communities faced potential hardship and loneliness, in addition to fearing for their health. At the same time, I saw the tremendous, spontaneous surge in support that came from Ashwell and the other villages in our Arbury ward, with help flooding in from individuals and groups alike. It was very heart-warming.

Council motions this year included a ban on the sale and use of sky lanterns and helium balloons on Council land, an undertaking for all staff and elected members to take racial awareness and unconscious bias training, and a pledge to try and protect the public's say in the planning process in the light of changes proposed by the government. There were two extraordinary Council meetings. In August, the Conservative group's support for dissolving the District Council in favour of a single overarching authority for the whole of Hertfordshire was voted down; and in October the Liberal Democrats were thwarted in their attempt to reduce the number of sites allocated for development in the Local Plan.

In November, the Planning Control Committee refused permission for a housing estate on land between Lucas Lane and Ashwell Street, owing in part to the adverse effect it would have on the Conservation Area. Hopefully, this will send out a clear signal to other opportunistic developers eyeing up Ashwell's remaining open spaces. We look forward also to the adoption of Ashwell's Neighbourhood Plan with its own substantial policies.

The Council's policy of wilding some green spaces to promote biodiversity proved popular, with many people appreciating the

explosion of wildflowers in the summer. For once, the pandemic left us better off, as reduced staffing levels meant that even more verges were left uncut than planned and we were treated to some beautiful floral displays along our country lanes at a time when our spirits really needed lifting.

I do hope that during the year to come we will be able to enjoy life in a more relaxed and carefree way again. Perhaps, though, we will also remember those amazing clear skies and quiet roads of the spring lockdown and redouble our efforts to reduce the carbon emissions and unthinking use of natural resources that have so damaged our planet. Then at least we'll be able to look back and say something positive came from the strange experience that was 2020.

Tom Tyson,

District Councillor, Arbury Ward

✉ tom4arbury@gmail.com

✉ tom.tyson@north-herts.gov.uk



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Men's health – low sperm motility/morphology, impotence, prostatitis, low libido,

Respiratory – asthma, hay fever, sinusitis, bronchitis,

Lifestyle – depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, chronic fatigue, heart disease, stopping smoking, high blood pressure, drug withdrawal and side effects, M.E, urinary incontinence, diabetes and thyroid management, excessive sweating.



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COMMUNITY GROUPS

A photograph of a stone building with a sign for 'The Ashwell Village Museum'. The sign is dark blue with white text and is mounted on a black wrought-iron bracket. The building is made of light-colored stone with visible mortar lines. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

The
ASHWELL
Village
MUSEUM

One of the many factors which make Ashwell such a vibrant and happy place is the high level of voluntary contributions made by Ashwellians towards organising community groups and projects. You can read about the achievements of these groups and projects in the following pages. The Parish Council is very conscious of the value of this work and would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those involved.

If you would be interested in volunteering to help the community yourself, please see page 28 at the end of this section of the Ashwell Yearbook for a list of some of the possible ways in which you might become involved.

Ashwell Village Trust

The Trust was set up in 1986 when the Cottage Garden (bought by fundraising in the village in 1968) was threatened with development. The Trust's charity statement is on the Parish Council's website (Ashwell Charities page).

The Trust owns the garden and a band of hard-working volunteers led by Martyn Hird do the gardening. (See Martyn's report which follows.)



The Chairman of the Parish Council is the Chairman of the Trust, together with two members of the Parish Council as two of the trustees. The current Trustees are: Graham Lee (Chairman), Simon Bettany (Hon Treasurer), Amanda Bettany, Gordon Hill, Claire Moynihan, Liz Moynihan, Jane Porter; David Sims and Mark White (Parish Councillor trustees).

The AGM of the Trust usually takes place before the June Parish Council meeting but there was no meeting in 2020. This year it is hoped that we will be able to hold a separate meeting when matters related to the AVT can be discussed in more detail - members of the public will be welcome.

Donations to support the Trust can be made via the Clerk.

Jane Porter, Parish Clerk ☎ 743706

✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

Ashwell Cottage Garden

As gardeners, we are used to adapting to changing conditions, whether that be the uncertainty of the British weather, the changing seasons or the constant fight against pests and diseases. Owing to Covid-19 the Cottage Garden volunteers have had to rise to the challenge of changing the way we work: no more large work parties allowed and social distancing always on our minds. We have run some smaller work parties of six, to fit in with government rules, and volunteers who have felt unable to attend have been encouraged to work on their own. This flexible approach has kept the garden looking at its best and was particularly valuable in the spring when growth is at its most vigorous. This stopped the garden from being overwhelmed with the more prolific plants and allowed other less vigorous plants to stand their ground and shine.

We are very lucky in Ashwell that not only do we live in a beautiful village but we are also surrounded by countryside that is easily accessible to most villagers. There are still households with small houses and even smaller gardens that may have struggled during the pandemic and we are pleased that the Cottage Garden has provided a small haven for many of these individuals and families. It has been very rewarding to all concerned with the garden that it has been so well used and enjoyed during these difficult times.

Gardens are continuously evolving and the Cottage Garden is too. During 2021 we have plans to develop some of the older beds in the garden so that we rejuvenate the area and bring new life into it while keeping its charm and character intact. This will enable the people of Ashwell and our visitors to continue to enjoy this community space.

Martyn Hird

✉ iona1996@aol.com

Moss Cottage Homes

Moss Cottage Homes in Hodwell provide six one-bedroom cottages at an affordable rent, primarily for older residents of Ashwell.

At the start of 2020 the Trustees received a full survey of the cottages, including architectural drawings so that we no longer have to rely on outdated plans. The survey drew our attention to essential repairs, which have now been completed. There are a few outstanding internal works, but these will be put on hold until the government restrictions have been lifted and is safer to enter residents' homes. Emergency work will be carried out if necessary. The remaining double-glazing work has been completed and this has resulted in warmer homes and reduced energy bills.

The Trustees now have breathing space to draw up a 5-year plan and allocate money for any major work in the future.

This year the Trustees said a fond farewell to The Reverend Robert Evens who, in his capacity as Rector, was a Trustee member. Robert's background and knowledge of almshouses was a valuable resource and we wish him well in his retirement. We welcome Sarah Talks, who has joined the Trustees in her capacity as church warden and John Rhodes whose background will widen the expertise of the Trustees. Although no longer a church warden, David Richards has kindly agreed to stay on the Trustees until a new Rector has been appointed.

The current Trustees in alphabetical order are Rachel Godschalk, Cliff Jenkinson, Madeleine Legg (Chair), Jane Munns, David Richards, Ann Robertshaw, Phillida Shaw, John Rhodes and Sarah Talks. More information is available from the Clerk to the Trustees.

Madeleine Legg, Chair of Trustees 📞 742385



Moss Cottage Homes. Photo by Madeleine Legg.

The Ashwell 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 Church 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.

Our 2020 began on New Year's Day with a hugely successful soup lunch provided by Jane Buxton and her band of helpers. On offer were three homemade soups together with warm bread and cheese scones as well as coffee, tea and hot chocolate. We even provided take-out containers for those on the move! And, of course, books were available to browse or borrow. There was no charge but we asked for donations and these were more generous than we could have imagined, with a total of £545 going to Jimmy's, the homeless shelter in Cambridge. Very many thanks to Judy Banham, Sheelagh Bennett, Rachel Godschalk and Debbie Toombs for soup-making, scone-baking, serving and washing-up and to all those who supported the event, including our friends from Hinxworth.

Despite the two lockdowns the Book Swap facility remained available whenever the Post Office was open and we had a steady stream of borrowers. This provided a much-needed community service while book shops and libraries were closed. Teresa King did an excellent job in keeping the books in order and selling those we no longer needed for a nominal fee. Together with pre-lockdown donations, we were able to give around £100 to St Mary's Tower Fund.

In normal times the Book Swap Café is open on the second Saturday of each month (check Ashwell Village News for any variation), between 10:00 am and noon, when coffee, tea and biscuits (cake if you are lucky) for a mere 50p are on offer while you browse. And, of course, the Book Swap is available during Post Office opening hours.

Jane Buxton ✉ jane.buxton@icloud.com

Eileen ten Hove 📞 742746



In normal times the Book Swap Café is open on the second Saturday of each month (10am - 12pm).

Ashwell Housing Association



Ashwell Housing Association owns ten properties in Back Street which were built around 1979. We have 2 bungalows, 4 flats (one of which is a small studio flat) and 4 x 3-bedroom houses. All are let to local people, or those with very strong connections to the village. First Garden City Homes (previously called Howard Cottage Housing Association) carry out routine maintenance for us and also provide an excellent management service and give us advice when necessary.

This year has been a strange one, as it has for all organisations. We have not had our usual number of meetings although we did manage to hold a socially distanced AGM in the Village Hall in September.

We commissioned a structural survey of all the properties at the beginning of the year, which was carried out in February. From this we are able to plan any major works that may need doing during the next five to ten years. We have to remember that the properties are now over 40 years old.

We have had two changes of occupancy during the last twelve months. One of the bungalows and one of the three-bedroom houses now have new tenants.

Sadly, one of our committee members left us recently as he moved to the New Forest. Peter Saxton took the role of Honorary Treasurer and was a great asset to the committee. We will miss him. I am pleased to say, however, that we have two new members: Jack Busby and George Tait. They are already proving their worth.

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. We are planning to update our website during the next few months and the plan is that the form will be available there. But in the meantime, if you would like further details please contact our applications officer Gill Field: barry.gill@care4free.net

Liz Fitzsimmons, Chairman

☎ 742722

Ashwell Archaeology

Like many Ashwell organisations, Ashwell Archaeology had to suspend its programme of activities from March 2020 owing to the pandemic. Until then, our enthusiastic group of volunteers made a much-appreciated contribution in continuing to wash archaeological finds from the area.

We have all been very excited by the archaeological finds in the church. A report on those finds features on page 101 in this Yearbook.

We hope we shall be able to resume our activities during 2021, when you are all most welcome to join us. Keep in touch via our website: www.ashwellarchaeology.org

Sarah Talks

✉ sarah@sarahtalks.me



Planting at Chalk Bank Close. Photo by Ken Coyne.

Greening Ashwell

The inaugural meeting of Greening Ashwell took place on 21st February 2020. Over 30 villagers came to find out what it was all about. I was thrilled that the village community immediately embraced this initiative and that individuals came forward to take on tasks.

The Big Climate Fight Back by The Woodland Trust has a target of planting one million trees and Greening Ashwell endorses this aim. We aim to conserve our native habitats by restoring natural features through community involvement. We need to protect landscape features like significant trees and native hedges.

From this inaugural meeting a second gathering took place at the URC Hall. Again, it was well attended, with Lindsay Dew generously providing the hall and refreshments. £30 was raised in donations from attendees. A survey of the village's 'green assets' was planned to establish what Ashwell has already. The proposed Green Plan got underway with Anne Fletcher leading. From the results we started planning what to do next. It was immediately apparent that many of the significant mature trees in the village have no statutory protection, highlighted by the felling of the horse chestnut in Lucas Lane by Logan Homes. The heritage of our hedges is also diminishing by indiscriminate removal. We also have some native plant communities which are becoming poorer by unsympathetic HCC management. I am grateful to Chris James for highlighting this problem. Our Green Plan will be an essential part of programming future actions.

The Parish Council from the start has been a supporter of Greening Ashwell and Cllr. David Simms provided us with our first enhancement project. The new housing on the former Cook Engineering site damaged the hedge along this section of the Ashwell Street public footpath and the Parish Council provided funds to restore it with native stock. The work was done by our Green Team who also did a sterling job, weeding in the warm spring weather and establishing watering rotas, thanks to Clare Docking.

We continue to plan ahead and are looking at forming a constitutional society (thanks to Sue and Gordon Hill) so that we can challenge environmental issues when needed. We have applied to The Woodland Trust for stock to carry on with projects and this has just been approved so in the spring of 2021 we can carry on with our enhancement work. This will coincide with National Tree Week, postponed until 2021.

We have also helped other like-minded Ashwell projects: the new Museum Herb Garden and the St. Mary's Churchyard wildflower project with Kate Haddock's team. Greening Ashwell hopes to become part of a Natural Recovery Network (NRN)

Getting the message out to a wider audience beyond the village will give us a greater public voice so we now have Greening Ashwell Facebook and WhatsApp, thanks to Anna Docking. We look forward positively to a more sustainable future for all.

Ken Coyne, Co-ordinator

✉ kencoyne@hotmail.co.uk

☎ 743723

Ashwell Patients' Group



Dr Howe, Linda Johnson and Dr Hasham prepare for mass flu vaccination.

Like all parts of the NHS, our surgery has had to adapt to cope with the pandemic. In accordance with government guidelines, extraordinary measures have had to be put in place to protect patients and staff. We are operating on three sites – Ashwell ('cold') offering telephone or video consultations for routine matters; Bassingbourn ('warm') for patients who need to be seen physically; and Letchworth ('hot') for patients with suspected Covid symptoms. At the time of writing our staff are delivering flu vaccinations at drive-in sessions. With 2,800 of our patients eligible, this is no small task. The weather could have been kinder but the process has gone smoothly. Pharmacies in Ashwell and Bassingbourn have also provided a valuable vaccination service.

Ashwell Patients' Group has also had to adapt, with face-to-face meetings no longer possible, and now meets regularly via Zoom. These meetings enable the surgery to keep members posted about how we are coping and the difficulties that are being faced. Members are also able to raise issues of concern arising from patients in the community. One of the interesting topics has been the development of Primary Care Networks (PCN), a grouping of neighbouring practices to collaborate in sharing ideas and services. We are linked to surgeries in Baldock and Letchworth. The scheme is in its infancy but has proved beneficial in dealing with Covid-19. We shall follow its progress with interest.

Our committee is made up of members of surgery staff and representatives of the various areas covered by our practice:

Dr Matt Jarvis (GP), Mark Pilling (Practice Manager), Linda Johnson (Operations Manager), Tessa Cathcart (Bassingbourn), Peter Chapman (Ashwell), Harry King (Hinxworth), Wendy Kitchener (Edworth), Mike Pearch (Ashwell), Detlev Popp (Guilden Morden), Andrea Rowland (Steeple Morden).

Peter Chapman, Chair ✉ peterchapman70@yahoo.co.uk

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Madeleine Legg demonstrating spinning at a Makers In The Museum meeting. Photo by Peter Greener.

Ashwell Village Museum



2020 was certainly different. Having remained open during our big renovation, we finally had to close owing to reasons beyond our control. This gave the opportunity for a few of us, at socially distant times, to put the displays back in order, a task which turned out to be much

bigger than we imagined, especially as we were unable to spread the load through our pool of willing volunteers. However, along the way we rediscovered many items held in store that can now come out and shine among the old favourites. Then in October, just as everything looked presentable again, we found a leak in the roof of the storeroom and had to move the contents out into the galleries, creating turmoil again.

30th November 2020 was our 90th Anniversary, which we celebrated with a thank you card that went out to every Ashwell household. As a present, we offered a download of our little book which transcribes the talks given by old Ashwellians at the 50th Celebrations: *I Was Born in the High Street*. This is still available on our website and makes enjoyable reading about days gone by.

Our monthly 'Makers at the Museum' squeezed in three sessions at the beginning of the year. The sessions include a talk, a craft activity and a cup of tea, with the subjects ranging from Roman Temples to Spinning and Weaving.

Meanwhile, we have strived to maintain a presence through social media and our website: www.ashwellmuseum.org.uk

Like the building, it requires regular maintenance but we now need some serious (and costly) updating to bring the online catalogue back to life and fit for the Mobile Age. The community archive website is still going strong and there is plenty to see on it. Further material has been added to the stories of those on the WW1 Memorial Roll, the 100 Years Ago Diary and biographies. You can also discover the true history of our black doctor, James Robertson at: http://www.ashwellmuseum.org.uk/page/james_george_robertson_md?path=0p4p113p

The Museum Lottery has been especially needed this year as we have lost all our usual fundraising revenue although our regular expenses have remained the same.

With the help of the Trustees, the Friends and curatorial volunteers, even from behind closed doors, we will continue to care for the collection you have placed in our hands for

safekeeping, answer any nagging historical questions and hope that soon we can welcome you all back to normal service.

Peter Greener and Sarah Talks

☎ 742956

✉ enquiries@ashwellmuseum.org.uk

Ashwell Village Museum Lottery

2020 Results

The Museum Lottery was started in 2019 with the aim of raising vital funds towards the maintenance of the Museum following the restoration project. The lottery is on-going, with quarterly draws at the end of March, June, September and December each year, with 50% distributed as prizes. The first draw took place at the end of December 2019 and during its first year of operation the Museum Lottery has raised a fantastic £2875 and, of course, the same amount has been distributed as prizes. None of the money from ticket sales has been used for administration or expenses. The winners for the year were:

December 2019	March 2020
1st K Mills 2nd D Richards 3rd A Munns	1st N Holmes 2nd C Leedham 3rd S Jackson
June 2020	September 2020
1st L&A Heal 2nd F Moynihan 3rd M Hoffman	1st P Tunnard 2nd T Simmons 3rd S Chalkley

This has been a challenging year for many organisations and charities in particular. The Museum Lottery has made a vital contribution to the upkeep of the Museum. The Trustees extend their gratitude to those who have taken part.

Join the Lottery now to help ensure the future of the Museum and your chance to win one of the quarterly prizes. For an entry form please get in touch with:

Shirley Wardrop ☎ 742861

✉ ashwellvillagemuseum@gmail.com

Friends of Ashwell Village Museum



The Friends of the Museum support the trustees and curators with some practical and frequently financial assistance to enable the smooth running of the Museum. We are a small committee, meeting about three times yearly but communicate regularly through phone calls and emails should the need arise. We also compile the lists of volunteers who welcome visitors when the Museum is open, as well as having an excellent team of people who keep it clean. Please do let us know if you are willing to help us.

As most villagers are aware, we hold regular talks and trips, which sadly this year have been postponed, but we thought the example of some contributions financed by past events would be of interest. A very recent example of this was the urgent need for a dehumidifier to dry out a part of the Museum after an ingress of water. We agreed to fund that so Peter could install it within days. During the last two years we have passed on the money raised from Sunday Teas, purchased the handrail on the stairs, the new heaters in the Museum, some storage boxes and essential computer equipment. All this has been funded by profit from our talks and trips so we can only say 'thank You' to everyone who has attended. Certainly, we look forward to our future events as we have an interesting list.

The committee officers are listed below and our current committee also includes Sue Hall, Bridget Macey, Monica Boggust, Jane Buxton and Tony Francis. We said goodbye this year to Ann Robertshaw and Eileen ten Hove who had been stalwarts on the committee for many years. We owe them a big thank you.

Do let David Hall know if you would like to join the Friends or if you would like to volunteer please contact Karen Mills.

Jill Powell, Chair ☎ 742318

David Hall, Treasurer ☎ 743799

Karen Mills, Secretary ☎ 742155

Ashwell Village Hall

All community groups, schools, clubs, churches and businesses make plans for contingences that might arise in the coming year. This is usually done through insurance for fire, flooding, lighting strikes and also having a comprehensive list of useful numbers for repairs and maintenance. But the big “what if” of the year was not predicted: the Covid-19 pandemic. This of course considerably disrupted the running of the Village Hall. There was much advice available through the media and on-line but some of it was legislation, some recommendations and some hearsay. Rosemary and Mike Pearch, with the help from A.C.R.E (Action within Communities in Rural England), organised all the requirements needed to open the Hall. Other helpers included Alan Munns and Phil McGoldrick who set up the screens so that users could participate via Zoom and managed upgrades and improvements to electrical systems. My thanks to them for keeping the hall going.

The District Council assisted the hall with a grant of £10,000 to pay for ongoing costs that arose during lockdown when income was reduced. This covered the provision of hand sanitiser points, etc, and will cover additional cleaning costs for a period.

The Hall has many assets, not least of which is parking facilities for 24 cars. When things return to the new normal it will be ready for the twelve or thirteen groups that have used it in the past and others who are looking to start a new class or society. We all look forward to the new normal.

Sam Wallace, Chairman

Rosemary Pearch, Bookings Secretary

☎ 742913 ✉ rosypearch@live.com

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Your Village Needs You - Get Involved!

If you would like to get involved in community activities the contact details for the organisations in the above section of the Ashwell Yearbook might be a good place to start. But there are many other ways in which your help would also be invaluable to the village, such as the following, for example:

- Parish Council working parties, e.g. at the Springs (see p. 11)
- Youth Organisations (pp. 61-62)
- Charities (pp. 65-69)
- Ashwell Quarry Nature Reserve (p. 65)
- Church fund-raising, e.g. the Flea Market, Book Swap or Christmas Fair (pp. 22,107)
- Church Tower Restoration (p. 103)
- Ashwell Music Festival (p. 107)
- Ashwell Show (p. 108)
- Being a volunteer driver for Royston & District Community Transport (p. 126)



Lawn Care

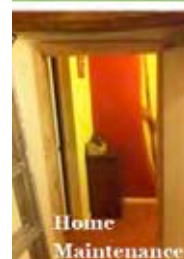
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LOCKDOWN
PORTRAITS



Ashwell photographer Chris Frazer Smith (pictured above) took a series of photographic portraits of Ashwellians during the lockdown period at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic in the spring and early summer of 2020. We reproduce some of these wonderful studies here, accompanied by the thoughts about this unusual time, as recorded by the subjects themselves. We are most grateful to Chris for these remarkable pictures and to the people themselves for their permission to use them and their accompanying words.



Brian Deal “In a time of uncertainty and worry the neighbourhood has united, showing traits that perhaps were previously hidden: patience and understanding, volunteering to help in a common cause, and above all a love like never before for compromised neighbours and friends.”

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



The Howards “Being given more time together as a family has allowed us to see our children successfully adapt and embrace the challenges this period of time has thrown at us. We are very proud of them.”



Jo and John Mills “Your photographs make me pleased that I too decided to concentrate my sculpture on the ever-stimulating ever-changing world of proper people.”



Rev'd Robert Evens "The Church buildings are closed during this period of self-isolation. But the Church is not a building and it is flourishing thanks to the many "Good Neighbours" in our community, and to pre-recorded services on YouTube and live streaming on Zoom on Sunday mornings."

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



The Banisters “Whilst we have missed seeing our wider circle of friends and family, lockdown has given us quality time together without the usual distractions. We’ve all quite enjoyed playing in the garden, sunlit village walks and chats with neighbours over the fence. With two young children and a new puppy, it’s certainly not been boring.”



The Talks “Sarah and I were quietly shuffling into the fluffy carpet slippers of the empty nesters when suddenly two of our adult children and their partners returned, bringing tequila, YouTube dance tutorials and themed cooking nights. We have occasionally wandered off for gardening, Egyptology and novel writing; but our pace of life has definitely been upped and, you know, we’re rather enjoying it.”



The Stricklands “The isolation has been a challenge for us, with its mix of uncertainty and disappointment at cancelled plans. Amongst this there have been tender moments and also a growing belief that we will come through it stronger. Chris’s photo in my vegetable patch captures this mix perfectly.”

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



Margaret Budgen “I was happy that the eased lockdown meant I could get out and play golf again and see friends. Real isolation limited me to (just a little) garden practice. Mind you, I have got to know my garden better than ever this year and I’ve appreciated the amazing wonders of nature.”



The Boormans “It’s been an absolute joy being together and an unexpected treat. Teamwork has made this experience a positive one which we won’t forget.”



The Kingsburys “Lockdown has given us back the hours spent each day commuting or driving the kids here and there. Time to enjoy properly the place we live in, the family banter and the unexpected satisfaction of a tidy garden shed.”

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



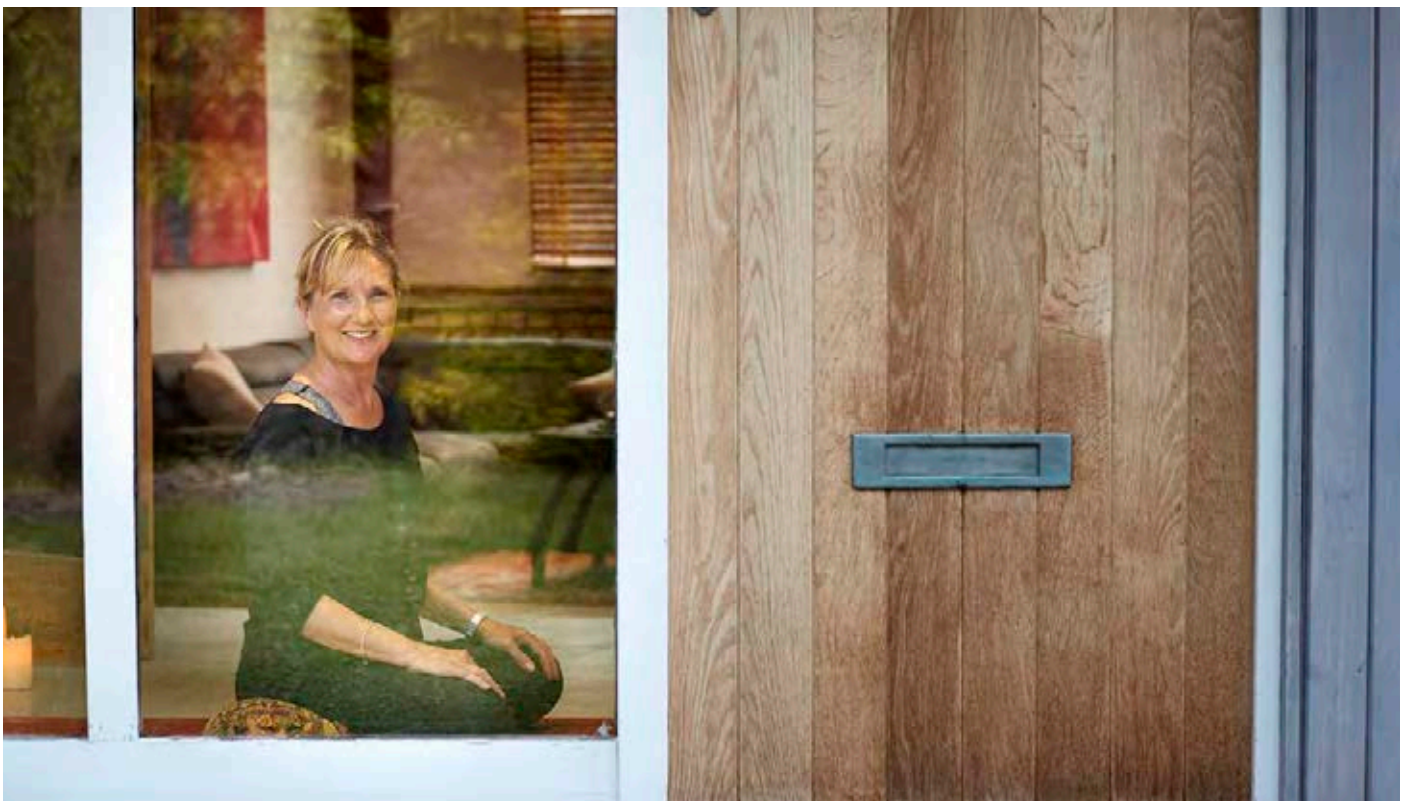
The Wards “In our busy lives (studying and working) we struggle to spend time together as a family. The isolation process has changed that and it’s been lovely to see all the family engaging like never before. Meal times, chatting in the garden. We have had a disco night, film nights, table tennis competitions and the boys have helped us in the garden and kitchen.”



The ten Hoves “In spite of the lockdown, it has been lovely to welcome in the spring together as a family. We feel fortunate in many ways.”



Mick and Mavis Fox “Watching the world go by from our garden has been very sociable. We are lucky to have family close by to see safely. We both miss seeing our friends and having a beer or two in the pub. Mick does not drink at home so we’re saving up for the day when we can socialise and have a beer in our local pub.” *Chris’s photo of Mick and Mavis is one of the winning 100 portraits selected by the Duchess of Cambridge and included in the Hold Still 2020 portrait exhibition. Congratulations to Chris and to Mick and Mavis.*



Tracey Luggeri “Highs and lows. Busy days and sleepy ones. Loving our daughter at home and missing our son. Yoga on Zoom. Quiet country walks. Reflecting in peace and stillness. Cherishing family and friends. Enjoying warm sunny days and holding hope in my heart.”

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



The Days “Some of us have not stopped working on the front line. Knowing my family are safe and well under one roof is a comfort and as we try to return to some degree of normality it is a relief to get back outside together.”



The Fishes “The physical isolation from our family and friends has pushed us into more use of technology. In common with others, we’re finding Zoom meetings very successful, and we find we are now seeing the family more often than ever!”



The Cottage Garden remained open.



Support for the NHS.



Easter Day Communion. Robert's First Zoom to the Ashwellians.



Residents in Woodforde Close celebrating in a socially distanced manner.

Photos above by Greg Campbell and Margaret Budgen.

LOCKDOWN PORTRAITS



Celebrating VE Day.



Socially distanced queues outside Days.



Socially distanced queues outside Crumps.



Pubs are closed and so takeaways spring up all over Ashwell.



Showing more support for the NHS.

Photos above by Greg Campbell and Margaret Budgen.

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EDUCATION

Ashwell Primary School



Ashwell Primary School continues to be extremely popular. We currently have very limited spaces in a few of our year groups. The school has 223 children on roll from Nursery through to year 6.

The year 2020 year was truly like no other we have faced before as a school community! Fortunately, it was business as usual in January for a short period of time.

On Thursday 16th January, our Year 6 athletics team competed in the North Herts Sports Hall athletics competition at Fearnhill. They took part in a range of track and field events to earn points for the overall team. Thirteen schools took part and Ashwell did fantastically well, finishing 4th overall. A huge achievement, congratulations to those children to took part.

On Tuesday 4th February two teams of Year 3 and 4 pupils represented the school at a regional speed stacking competition at Knights Templar School. They competed in different speed stacking cycles as a team, as well as in individual races. Both teams displayed fantastic teamwork, with the boys' team finishing 1st out of 16 teams and the girls finishing 8th. The boys' team qualified for the county finals, due to be held in March but cancelled owing to Covid-19

On Wednesday 5th February, Year 2 took part in an exciting workshop all about Florence Nightingale. They looked at the impracticalities of what Florence Nightingale would wear when nursing, compared with nurses' clothes today. The children also got the opportunity to look at artefacts that Florence Nightingale would have used, such as her lamp,

bandages, a medicine holder and a cup used to keep patients hydrated. Year 2 finished off the morning by acting out events from Florence Nightingale's life.

Year 1 were excited to play with toys from the North Herts Museum's collection, some of which were over 100 years old. The range of toys available encouraged the children to demonstrate a range of skills: pushing, pulling, squeezing, rolling, throwing, imaginative construction and counting. There were also several optical illusion toys, which the children found fascinating.

On the 14th February, as part of Feeling Good Week, the whole school took part in a Circus Skills Workshop, funded by our PTA. Each class used a variety of equipment such as diablo, spinning plates, balance boards, juggling balls/clubs and devil sticks. The workshop motivated children to not only enhance their physical awareness but to develop their team-building skills and improve their self-esteem - all while having fun.

On Wednesday 26th February our Year 6 children from Football Club took part in a rural schools' football tournament at the Baldock Arena. Despite winning all of our group matches and not conceding a single goal, we looked to have run out of steam in the Semi-Final match and suffered an agonising 1-0 loss to St Chris.



Speed Stacking.



During 2020, Staff, Governors and children spent time reviewing our school vision. While we all felt that our statement still meets our vision, we decided to create a strap line that summarised this:

Shaping futures: Together we learn, care and grow

In addition to this, we decided on six core values to work towards:

Respect, Empathy, Resilience, Cooperation, Independence and Self-awareness

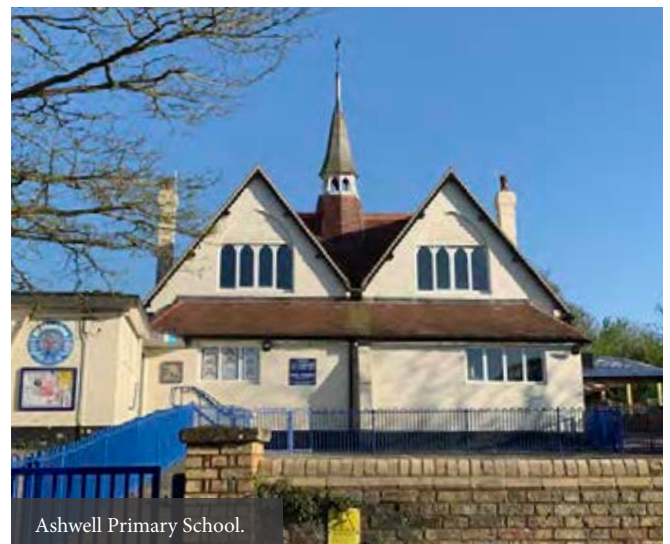
On Friday 21st March, I experienced the strangest time in my career to date: walking around the school to deliver the message to classes of children that school would be closing. Saying goodbye to our families at the gate that day was surreal. The school closed its doors to almost all of our children as the nation went into lockdown. Our staff quickly adapted and moved to delivering education for our children remotely for the rest of the academic year. From March through to July we put in emergency measures to enable a childcare facility at the school for children of key workers.

I was delighted to be able to begin re-opening our school more fully on 1st June, in line with the government guidance and wishes. Following a thorough risk assessment of our site, staffing capacity and physical space, we were really pleased to be able to formulate a plan that enabled the year groups designated by the DfE to return. Numbers in our key worker groups grew, which led to the opening of a second bubble. Following this, we then decided that, to give us the best chance of bringing back as many children as possible, we would set up a part time return for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

We were able to provide our usual five mornings a week for our Nursery children. From Monday 22nd June, we were also able to welcome back Year 5.

I cannot find the words to share with you how incredibly proud I have been of our whole school community during this difficult time. I applaud my staff for their hard work, dedication, commitment and enthusiasm. They are an amazing team and we are all incredibly lucky to have them working for our children and families. I must also praise how well our children have coped with the difficulties that they have experienced this year.

Despite the difficult times, I can honestly say I've never been prouder of our school, my colleagues and our profession. I am so proud of the children and parents who have learnt in whatever way they can at home. I am so proud of our key workers, but also their children who continued to come to school without their friends but came in smiling every day.



Ashwell Primary School.



National Chess Competition.

2020 Highlights

January – Sportshall athletics competition

February – Hertfordshire maths competition, ‘Feeling Good’ week, safer internet day, Year 5 West Stow visit, Football competition.

March – World Book Day events, Chess Championships, Choir performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Science Week, school closed as the nation went into lockdown.

April – School provided Key Worker childcare provision during the Covid-19 pandemic.

May – School provided Key Worker childcare provision during the Covid-19 pandemic

June – School re-opened its doors to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

July – Covid-19 Sports Day events in bubbles. All classes had a reuniting end of term picnic on the meadow.

September – School fully re-opened to all year groups. Parents had the opportunity to attend our ‘Meet the Teacher’ evening.

October – Year 6 virtual class assembly.

November – Year 4 and 5 virtual class assembly; we celebrated anti-bullying week and Children In Need; PTA ‘Who’s that guy’ event took place.

December – Widdershins theatre production; Christmas Lunch.

I would like to thank everyone in the community for their continued support. It is a real privilege to be the Headteacher of this fantastic village school. I look forward to ensuring that the school continues to play a central part in the life of the village in the months and years to come.

Simon England, Headteacher

☎ 742297

Back To School After Lockdown

As they returned to Ashwell Primary School when it partially re-opened on 1st June, after the first lockdown, the pupils in Year 6 recorded their impressions. We would like to have printed them all but there wasn't room, so here are a couple of examples.

When I first got out of the car and entered the school grounds, I could almost smell that familiar and usual smell, wafting into my nose – school. I embraced it, sighing, knowing it felt like home. I was worried, though, by the thought of everything changing, but as I stepped into the new and improved classroom I knew it would all be ok.

The teachers were brilliant. They quickly helped me settle in and get back into the routine. After a little while I loved it already and I was laughing and actually skipping for joy.

This wonderful school has put so much into welcoming us back – all of us – and I therefore feel as safe as I could have hoped for, and even better for finally being back!

Florence



Wolverly House.

As I walked through the gate of the school at 8:45 am, earlier than usual, I hesitated. There in front of me were my friends. Yes, I had seen them through the internet during this time but it wasn't the same. Now I could see them in the flesh I felt so happy, and yet sad too, not to be able to walk right up to them!

The walk to the classroom wasn't the same. The noisy meadow was calm and silent for a change. Yes, it was quiet but I can cope with that change. It felt good to be back finally. By day three, today, I feel more settled in. It is hard to play socially distanced games and the lessons are different. But there are good things too. I now have my own desk and my own stationery - which I love! No learning partners, but we still talk. I'm just so happy to be back!

Joseph

Ashwell School Parent Teacher Association

The Ashwell School PTA consists of parents and teachers who raise much needed money to provide extra materials, equipment and facilities to enrich the education of the pupils. We provide a link between parents and the school, and an opportunity for parents to become more actively involved.

2020 started in the normal fashion with monthly 'Let them Eat Cake' refreshments, and a school disco in February, which was fantastic with a great set from Simon McCutcheon. We stopped selling the plastic toys and replaced them with face paints, tattoos, nail painting and glow in the dark bowling, which the children all loved. Then in March we managed to just squeeze in the Mothers' Day shop before the school closed. We moved our second-hand uniform shop online, which has worked very well.

Then, come September, we had to come up with slightly different ways to fundraise. We had two parents, Ni Button and Laurence Simon, volunteer to do a virtual London Marathon. On 4th October they ran 26.2 miles locally. The weather on the day was very wet and windy but they stuck with it and completed it in 4 hours 35 minutes and, to top it all off, they raised an amazing amount of money.

As fireworks night was a no-no, we wanted to come up with a community idea that could involve the whole village, so we decided on a Guy Fawkes trail on the theme of '*The Movies Who's that Guy*'. We asked people in the village to make a donation, and build guys in their front gardens or around the village. We created a map and quiz of the all the guys, which people could buy online. This was great success and it was lovely to see so many families and villagers walking around Ashwell in search of the guys. It really brought the village together in a very difficult time. It is definitely something we will consider doing in the future too.

We'd like to thank all the parents and others who spare time to volunteer or who support our events. Without you, we wouldn't be able to raise the money the school needs. We are raising money this year for new reading books for all classes.

Yvonne Wright, Chair ✉ ashwellpta@gmail.com

📍 Ashwell Primary School, Silver Street,
Ashwell, Baldock, Herts. SG7 5QL
Headteacher: Mr Simon England
School Office: Mrs Tracy Bowen
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Ashwell Pre-School



Ashwell Pre-School (formerly known as Ashwell Playgroup) has been operating in the village since 1975 and is currently based at the Village Hall. We are a charity, governed by Ofsted, run by fully qualified educators in Early Years Education, with a curriculum which covers the seven key areas of early learning. The year 2020 began well, with Pre-School open five days a week during term time, with standard session times of 9:15 am-12:15 pm, additional pre-arranged early drop off available from 8:00 am and lunch clubs available each day until 1:30 pm. A healthy intake of children enjoyed the wide range of activities available, including singing and dancing, story time, sand, water, art and crafts and other messy play, and regular use of the outdoor play space, including the mud kitchen, whatever the weather!

Of course, the Covid pandemic then hit and sadly we had to close our doors two weeks prior to the end of the Spring Term. In spite of the lockdown, our resilient Leader, Andrea McGowan Wood, supported by Deputy Leader, Sarah Rodway and by Caroline Leyland, continued with regular appropriate contact with our cohort of children, and regular messaging and sharing of resources began between parents and carers, children and staff via WhatsApp during the summer term. A 'wash hands for Pre-School' fundraiser was held during this time. A socially distanced leavers picnic was held in July, to allow the children to have some socially distanced contact at the end of term. Our grateful thanks to the Farris for hosting this event in their woodland. We opened again, with all Covid safety measures firmly in place, on 7th September and blessed with two new additional level 3 Educators, Natasha Waller and Karen Hipgrave. Our staff have all been truly amazing in the face of such a challenging time. As a result, the children in the new intake have all blossomed. We finished the autumn term with Christmas party fun as usual, including in house visits from Father Christmas! We have been especially pleased this

term to welcome Grace Charter, our new Apprentice, who will be training in Early Years Education with us over the forthcoming two years.

Our usual annual fundraising activities, such as the village duck race and running of the Messy Play tent at the Ashwell Show, had to be cancelled in 2020, with hard-hitting consequences for our budget, which is reliant on fundraising each year. The committee brainstormed and came up with an 'Art Around the Village Day' and to our delight, the Ashwell Life Drawing Class and other talented local artists grabbed sketch books, paints and pens with enthusiasm, and produced and donated some beautiful works to us, which were auctioned with great success online. The same wonderful talent produced our 2021 calendar which was available to buy locally over the autumn and winter. We have been truly touched by the generosity of the artists and villagers who have contributed to these events, including the many local shops who have kindly sold them for us. We must say an enormous thanks to Jo Auckland and Jack Quense who sponsored the printing of the calendar and to Linney Quadrant Printing (www.linney.com/quadrant) for giving us so much help with this printing. We collected 717kg of used clothing during and after lockdown and this raised money from HappyBags which has also been a valuable top-up to funds. Again, thank you so much to everyone who sorted out drawers and cupboards and took time to contribute to this event!

The current committee would like to extend warm thanks to previous members of the committee, including Elisa Luggeri, and Holly Smith who stepped down from the management committee in the spring, but who have remained very active in fundraising during 2020.

Planned events for 2021 include a Big Quiz, with more details to follow, Covid permitting. Any offers of help, however big or small, in helping out with and/or financially supporting these events would be greatly appreciated. The Committee are actively seeking a new Chair and an additional Secretary, so please do get in touch if you have time to spare and are interested in these posts.

Ashwell Pre-School Committee and Staff are looking forward to another successful year in 2021, whatever challenges the New Year may bring, and remain on hand as always to answer any queries you may have.

Merry Pertwee, Treasurer, Ashwell Playschool

✉ info@ashwellplaygroup.co.uk

📌 www.ashwellplaygroup.co.uk



Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group

The Ashwell Baby and Toddler Groups had a busy Spring Term in 2020, in spite of a very small committee of volunteers. Huge thanks to Karen Hipgrave and Rebecca Day for regularly running these sessions! Messy Play sessions were consistently popular and were regularly held in the United Reformed Church Hall every Thursday morning throughout term time, and the Baby Group on Tuesdays was increasingly popular too. Of course, with the arrival of Covid, the URC Hall had to close and our sessions had to stop. Very sadly, at the time of writing in December we have yet to resume, owing to the complexity of groups mixing within the confined space of the hall.

The ethos of the groups remains to provide a warm and welcoming coffee morning and safe play space, where Mums, Dads, Nannies, Grannies, Grandads and any other carers can relax a bit and have a brief sit down with a cuppa whilst the little ones enjoy a play in some like minded company.

The groups hope to resume as soon as possible during 2021. We are short of volunteers to host sessions so if you feel able to stick the kettle on and help get toys out ready for any of the sessions, please do get in touch.

Baby and Toddler Group Tuesdays (term time) 9:45-11:15 am, URC Hall, £1.50

This group is for newborn babies to toddlers, with the aim of being a safe and calm but stimulating session, with soft matting,

safe baby toys and plenty of support for mums needing to feed and change etc.

Messy Play Thursdays (term time) 9:45-11:15 am. URC Hall, £2.00

This group is noisier and messier and allows pre-schoolers to let off steam and literally get messy! We have lots of toys and play-doh, paints, glitter, sticking crafts, safe oatmeal/pasta/noodles for messier creative play, as well as sand and water tables. At different sessions we offer painting, crafts, biscuit decorating, musical instruments, and run themed sessions at Easter and in the Christmas terms.

Merry Pertwee, Treasurer, Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group
✉ merryasmith@yahoo.co.uk

For more details please also see our Facebook site:
📌 facebook.com/ashwellbabytoddlergroup

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John Thomas

Ashwell School Master 1826 to 1862

In March 1826 the Merchant Taylors' School in Mill Street got a new schoolmaster – John Thomas. A printer from Wigmore Street, London, he was appointed the previous year on condition he obtained a Certificate of Ability from the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. By February he had attended the National School for six weeks and was qualified to 'model and conduct School upon the National System', the system which used older children as monitors to instruct groups of younger children.

When he took up his appointment John Thomas was just 21 and recently married. Born in Crickhowell, Wales, he moved to London to become a printer but must have decided he was better suited to the classroom. His salary was £40 per annum but after two years he received an extra £5, following the good reports he had received from the school visitor, the vicar Henry Morice. After 18 years this was raised again, by ten guineas. In 1828 he was also given £5 annually for books.

In 1834 there was conflict between John Thomas and Henry Morice. Thomas wrote to the Merchant Taylors' Company in London that Morice was interfering in the school. Morice also wrote complaining of John Thomas's conduct. As there is no more in the records it seems the matter went no further.

In 1849 the Master, Wardens and the Clerk of the Company visited Ashwell to inspect the school. They examined the boys, after which they gave each boy a new shilling and the rest of the day as a holiday.

In 1852 Henry Hodgson, the new vicar, reported on the success of the school to the Company. However, a month later the Clerk had a complaint of severe ill-treatment meted out to the nephew of Edward Luff. The Clerk wrote to Thomas who seems to have managed to explain himself as nothing further was said.

In 1858 Henry Hodgson wrote to the Company saying that he had had serious complaints by parents of the 'harsh treatment' meted out by John Thomas. Thomas was asked to attend a meeting with the Master and Wardens so that the accusations could be discussed. At this meeting John Thomas admitted that the complaints were correct but said that they would not happen again.

It appears that John Thomas had made some enemies in Ashwell as a few days after his visit to London the Clerk wrote to Hodgson for his comments on an anonymous letter he had received about the schoolmaster. This matter also went no further, so one must assume that both the Rector, as Henry Hodgson now was, and the Company Clerk were satisfied that the accusations were ill-founded.

In 1861 Thomas sent a letter of resignation to the Company. He was only 56 and had been schoolmaster for 35 years. We can only speculate as to why he resigned as his letter has not been kept. However, he did stay on for the year it took to find his replacement before becoming a Collector of Taxes. It could be that during his interview in 1858 it was suggested that he might like to find another position and resign, but that there was no great hurry.

John Thomas, who then lived in Elbrook Cottage, which was, before demolition, just north of the dairy, died in 1878 aged 72. He was a respected man, who in his time had increased the number of pupils at the Merchant Taylors' School from 12 or 13 to between 40 and 50. Maybe after all his discipline was not considered as being too severe by most in Ashwell.

David Short



The only known photo of John Thomas.

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SPORT



Ashwell Academicals



The Accies football year was somewhat curtailed, as with all things in the *annus horribilis* of 2020, but one look at the faces of children and parents alike when football finally returned in late September told you everything that you need to know about the importance of our wonderful sport to the wellbeing of all.

The children were like coiled springs, finally released having been scrunched up compressed in a package for months and the feel-good factor really was a joy to witness. The results of the matches didn't even matter. Nobody cared whether they'd won or lost. They were playing football with their friends and having a fantastic time in the process, something they had been deprived of for so long.

The effort that went in from our coaches and committee to prepare for the return of football is not be underestimated. They did some great work on top of their usual efforts to ensure that football could continue and the Accies remain a safe place for the children to be. So, a massive thank you has to go to them. A special thank you to our new secretary, Vicki Prowle, who joined us at the start of the year and has taken on the extra role of Covid officer. She has done a fantastic job ensuring we are in a great place to continue playing football.

Even during the down time, the Accies were keeping busy; three bin bags of kit has been collected and donated to KitAid to support people in some of the world's poorest countries, so soon we may have an Accies team in another part of the world!

Off the pitch the battle goes on to improve facilities. With now over 150 children participating under the Accies banner, nine teams and just four pitches in the village, resources are stretched to the maximum. The few pitches that we do have are showing the strains of accommodating so much football, so if any kind landowners are reading this....my contact details are below!

As always, the club couldn't run without the fantastic support and help from the parents. Thank you to all who help out on match days or with training. I know it is massively appreciated. We look forward to seeing you in 2021. Up The Accies!

Andy Hayes, Chairman ✉ chairman@ashwellacademicals.com 📍 www.ashwellacademicals.com Twitter: @ashwellAccies

Ashwell Cricket Club



Cricket is a resilient game. We were given the green light in July to play our beloved sport and we set about re-planning the second half of the season.

Gone were the high fives, back slaps and hugging of previous years. Enter the elbow bump and the regular use of hand sanitizer on the field. In most other respects, though, the game was by and large unchanged. Perhaps the most notable other change was no 'tea'. Some liked that, others thought the whole point of the game was lost.

A season of 13 games: six on Saturday, in more miniature league format, but having no promotion or demotion relevance to 2021; and seven on Sunday, in our league format, but again with no promotion and relegation. A couple of those were friendlies.

No one will forget this season, that's for sure. As a club we won the first seven games and lost the last six. Notable highlights included AJ Cunningham making 51 against Lilley. Jack Busby made 64 against Rosslyn in a one-sided affair. Reg Redfern made 69 (more than 50% of the runs we scored that day) against Rickling Rambers. Ian Plumley hit a classy 74 against Birchanger. Tim Moynihan rolled back the years with 67 against Stevenage in a great contest, where the visitors looked bookies' favourites (batting second) until Dom Crossley (3-8) and Moynihan (2-14) showed everyone that carrots are better than sticks. And, while we're rolling back years, a quick mention goes out for Martin Talks (complete with bionic hip) who made 50 in a friendly against Primrose Hill until the hip didn't propel him fast enough and he was run out.



Ashwell Cricket Pavilion.



No. 1 by the scoreboard. Tim Greenbank is on the left and Tom Daniell on the right.

Top of the pile with the bat was Tim Greenbank who made an imperious 85 against St Margaretsbury in the first game of the season, a game in which young Harry Daniell (11 years old) clean bowled someone. In the same game his father Tom made 60 as we won with some ease – more elbow bumping!

Alex Griffin was top of the bowling stats. He took 14 wickets in the season, including 6-31 against Bassingbourn. Other notable performers with the ball included 11 season wickets for Dom Crossley, including a 4-37; 10 for Bene't Coldstream (including a fluky 4-29). Other four-wicket hauls came from Ollie England (4-29) and Tim Greenbank (4-31).

My personal favourite moment, though, was watching Paddy Robinson scythe the last ball of an innings for 6 over extra cover... Oh yes, and also 11 year old Freddie Simons running out a decent Baldock batsman with an arrow throw from square leg.

The club has acquired some amazing grant sponsorship money from the Henry Colbron Trust, which we hope to use to expand our junior cricket in 2021. So please, whether you're young or old, come and join us in 2021.

Bene't Coldstream ☎ 07971 404481

✉ ben.coldstream@resmsl.co.uk



Harry Daniell is on the left and Louie Trezise is on the right.

Cycle Club Ashwell

Riding through a Bumpy Time

2020 presented Cycle Club Ashwell with many opportunities throughout an otherwise difficult year. Cycling was a winner during lockdown and the club saw a surge of interest. Many people found the benefits of getting fresh air on a bike a great way to stay healthy, mentally and physically, as well as a brilliant way to have some quality family time.

The Youth section of the club saw unprecedented demand for its coaching sessions. The Club continues to nurture the skills and enthusiasm of local kids, with its British Cycling qualified coaches. As soon as restrictions allowed, there were weekly sessions on the Ashwell Small Gains field. The club always has some capacity for new joiners, who range from the casually interested to the very dedicated. It was a delight to see Ashwellian Sophie Lewis this year move to Manchester to pursue her Olympic dream at Team GB.

Once allowed, the club also organised a reduced programme of weekly summer time-trials in the local area. The highlight was instigating a new 10-mile course from Wrestlingworth to the Arrington roundabout and back. The course, was, as required, safety assessed and approved by the police and authorities, and will be an exciting course for 2021. Again, all newcomers to this addictive side to the sport where you 'race against yourself' are very welcome. No fancy cycling gear required!

There continues to be further interest in ladies-only rides and the club hopes to expand its programme in 2021.



The Ashwell village sports day.

The road-racing scene was severely limited in 2020, but there are fresh hopes for more ‘Tour de France’ style action in 2021, including Ashwell’s annual road race event nearby, around Elmdon.

The club also organised a series of cyclo-cross races at Small Gains in 2020. With careful adherence to government guidelines, riders from all over the region came to Ashwell. The racing season was understandably decimated and events like these were extremely rare and incredibly welcome.

There was a successful weekly summer gang of off-road riders exploring the bridlepaths around Ashwell. This side of the sport continues to see more interest.

There is much interest too in Zwift and riding and racing online. The club has lots of knowledge and help for those who want to get fit on a bike without leaving their home.

Cycle Club Ashwell is delighted to see the implementation of the ‘Twenty’s Plenty’ speed limit signage in the village. Ashwell is a village blessed in many ways, but some of its tight and narrow lanes have limited visibility.

Chris Potter, Secretary

✉ secretary@ccashwell.com

Ashwell Village Sports

The 2020 Village Sports Day was shaping up to be bigger, better and even more inclusive and popular than ever before. It went something like this:

“On Your Marks”....“Get Set”....“Wait For It”....“False Start!”

“Back to your starting blocks, please...”

....And we are still waiting for the welcome sound of the starter’s gun.

But the organisers remain committed to making the next event full of fun and entertainment for all – please do follow us on Facebook so that you are the first to know when we can resume this friendly annual fixture for the kids of the village and their families. It’s usually held each May, but we are really keen to make it happen in 2021, so we might consider later in the year.

It’s been so fantastic to see many families embracing the chances for walking, running and cycling around and about Ashwell in 2020, so we really look forward to seeing even more participants at the Ashwell Village Sports Day, plus the chance to win those treasured brown envelopes stuffed with silver or gold coins, or even a trophy!

That brings us to what have the committee been up to? Well, we’ve been refreshing our creativity and professionalism. Sadly, we’ve said goodbye and a heartfelt thank you to: Gemma Allan, Ed Strickland and Jo Arkwright. But pleasingly, we’ve got three new volunteer committee members: Laurence Simon, Dawn Sanders and Mike Banister.

What can you do if you’ve missed Ashwell Village Sports Day as much as us? Here are a few ideas:

1. Try the Round-the-Village Race loop, on foot or on bike, and now officially on Strava: www.strava.com/segments/23986808
2. Reminisce and get motivated with photo albums from 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018 by Chris Smith & Jo on our Facebook page. Please follow us!

3. Keep enjoying all the sporting opportunities you have!

We look forward to seeing you all again as soon as we can in 2021.

Guy Reed, Gregor Mitchell, Wendy Howard, Laurence Simon, Dawn Sanders, Mike Banister

www.facebook.com/Ashwellvillagesportsday

Ashwell Tennis Club

The wonderful game of tennis has existed in some form giving people pleasure for centuries - some say from as early as the 12th century, when bare hands were used instead of rackets. Back here in 2020, we are pleased that we have rackets as imagine all the hand sanitiser required if not! We are delighted to report that, with rackets and despite having to close the courts twice this year, on Government orders, lots of tennis has been played at our Jason Boorman Courts.

This year the Tennis Club has benefited from record levels of membership, the wise among you recognising the benefits of this outdoor sport which naturally lends itself to social distancing (all tennis etiquette having been removed for the time being, obviously). As a result, in the warm summer sunshine, the Courts were booked for more hours than ever and without the usual league matches to aim for, new groups were formed, within our new life rules, to keep that competitive spirit going - a glorious achievement for those members taking part and organising these sessions.

As soon as they could, our fabulous coaches, Charlotte and Neil, were back on court putting their charges, of all ages, through their paces. They're part of our Tennis Club Story. They have kept many members' physical and mental spirits up during these dystopian days and for that we thank them.

The Safari Supper fundraiser (for the proposed club house) also took place while horses were still racing, skiers were still skiing and commuters still commuting, all before lockdown number one. Brilliantly organised by Jo and Karen, these fabulous ladies, assisted by Ashwell's own excellent DJ, aka Simon, as well as the wonderful hosts, created a great night to remember.

By August Bank Holiday, we were permitted to have a doubles competition. The weather held and Rich and Chrissie held their

serves and nerves to become our new village champions. Bea and Monty put in stellar performances and it won't be long until they are Victrix and Victor Ludorum respectively.

It was not quite the year planned, but we hope that, just as previous generations have found ways of playing tennis through adversity, we too have done our little bit for this beautiful game. So, 2021? Bring it on!

Want to join us? Check out: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ashwell-tennisclub> for membership details. Keep well!

Jo Cunningham, Communications

Jeremy Bates, Chairperson ✉ ashwellsport@gmail.com

Ashwell Football Club

Last season's truncated Hitchin Sunday League fixtures saw the Ashwell Sunday side sitting in a creditable third place in their division at the moment when the pandemic saw the season finish before all the fixtures had been completed. We did beat the eventual league winners, but dropping points to some more lowly sides cost us an even higher league standing. We had also progressed to the Divisional Cup semi-final when the season ended so abruptly. So it turned out to be a 'what could have been' season.

As the season finished early, the league positions were allowed to stand, which resulted in Ashwell FC being promoted to Division Two, which was a great help as the Third Division is the hardest to get out of. All the new teams which join the league are placed in this Division, which makes promotion extremely difficult as some of these teams are playing at a level far beneath their ability.

This delayed season didn't start in a winning fashion when our old problem of playing well but not turning possession into goals cost us a few points, but after this shaky start things have been going well and we were starting to climb the table, and were looking to achieve a high league position before, once again, the season was curtailed.

As ever, for next season we are always on the look-out for new players who can improve our squad, so if anyone would like to join us then, when eventually sport can restart, come along to one of our home games at Ashwell Recreation Ground on a Sunday morning (10:30 kick-off) and we will go through the signing-on procedure.

Ray FitzGerald



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YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Ashwell Scout Group



2020 has caught me out. When it comes to writing the Scout Group report for each Ashwell Yearbook, I confess I normally start with the previous year's report and work out what was different – a camp venue here, an outdoor activity there, a competition or two – but not the impact of a global pandemic. Scouting aims to give young people adventurous, exciting experiences that help them grow as people, develop as members of their community, explore their own values and become equipped with skills for life. The young people and leaders of 1st Ashwell have risen to the challenge of pursuing these aims in a world that has been turned upside-down by coronavirus, and where even the simple act of gathering together has often been impossible.

Scouts (age 10½-14) moved to virtual meetings by Zoom during the lockdowns. We became more resourceful, managing digital flag breaks and virtual investitures while using quizzes, scavenger hunts and games to cover badge work, map skills and first aid. Between lockdowns we divided into two groups of 15, running parallel programmes of activities which included fire lighting, backwoods cooking, orienteering, rope skills, cycling and hiking. Before the first lockdown took hold, our team won the District Scout Cookery Competition and went on to represent Letchworth, Baldock and Ashwell District in the County final. Since then we have been pursuing the Personal Challenge badge with the main challenge being maintaining social distancing and hand hygiene at Scout meetings!

Cubs (age 8-10½) have also managed to meet in smaller groups and enjoyed treasure hunts round the village, games nights and badge work.

Beavers (age 6-7) also had some online meetings but mostly waited for the end of lockdown when we separated into groups for activities on alternate weeks, including obstacle courses and working towards the Chief Scout's Bronze Award.

All of this has been possible thanks to the fantastic enthusiasm of our Beaver, Cub and Scout leaders and the support of our executive committee. Scouting in Ashwell can only survive if we grow our team of leaders, so if you have ever thought of volunteering, now might be the time.

You do not have to have a 'Scouty' background: anyone who enjoys crafts, water activities, camping, sports, the outdoors, or simply helping young people enjoy being the best versions of themselves, would be extremely welcome. You would be joining a great team of friendly leaders who provide excellent comradeship and support, so if you can spare an hour or two one evening most weeks during term time, please get in touch.

Stuart Kendrick, Group Scout Leader

✉ gsl@1stashwellscouts.org.uk



Sausage Making Master Class

Ashwell Brownies



2020 was the year we zoomed online and did activities from home at Ashwell Brownies. The girls took it all in their stride, with fantastic results and incredible levels of maturity! As 2020 unfolded we managed to meet up a couple of times in October, for pond dipping at the Springs and a spooky treasure hunt.

We are hopeful that 2021 will allow us to meet again.

Natalie Terry

✉ ashwellbrownies@gmail.com

Ashwell Guides



Online, we've done a wide variety of activities, including dressing up for Star Wars day (May the 4th be with you!),

scavenger hunts, creating natural remedies, mindfulness techniques and exercises, creating our own fitness workout, a Taskmaster Challenge and, most popular of all, cooking.

VE day was during the first lockdown, so in preparation the Guides researched what it would have been like to have to spend night after night in an air-raid shelter in your garden. We discovered you would have to share a small space with your family or neighbours. It was often cold and damp. People played card games to pass the time or board games if there was room. They took food they had made from the rations available at the time and drinks because there was no running water. You couldn't leave the shelter with a torch or lamp in case the light was seen by enemy planes, so you even had to invent your own toilet! The Guides built their own shelters for the meeting the following week and we had a 'Meeting from the Bunker' where everyone gave us a guided tour of their own shelter. Being stuck at home in lockdown didn't seem so bad after thinking about air-raid shelters.

Our trip to take part in the annual Marine Conservation Society Great British Beach Clean was postponed. We hope we'll be able to go some time in 2021.

The Guides are always very inventive and come up with some great ideas for activities. Since they couldn't do their usual fundraiser at Ashwell at Christmas, they decided to make Christmas decorations for the Food Pantry and some small gifts and we had our usual pre-Christmas craft meeting to make cards for the residents of Wolverley House.

We've had great fun meeting online and doing activities we wouldn't otherwise have done but not all the Guides liked or were able to meet online, so we're very much looking forward to being able to meet in person again, even if it's outside, regardless of the weather.

Sue Long and San Carswell ✉ ashwellguides@gmail.com
☎ (Sue Long) 01223 208337 📍 www.girlguiding.org.uk

Asheteria Youth Club

Asheteria is a club for young people in year 5 and above which meets every Saturday in term time between 5:30 and 7:30 pm, either at the Parish Room or the URC Hall. The group provides a safe place for young people to 'hang out' and chat to friends.

There are lots of games and activities to choose from, all of which are entirely optional. A range of inexpensive snacks is also available. Our friendly youth leaders are there for the young people to talk to and to help make sense of any worries they may have.

Group members are able to make suggestions about activities they would like to take part in; we do our best to include them in our varied programme. These have included slime making, salt dough modelling, cake making, games and competitions. Luckily, we were able to fit in a trip to Clip 'n' Climb in Cambridge before our sessions were cut short. Safely clipped into safety harnesses, our young people were able to challenge themselves and hone their climbing skills on climbing walls of varying difficulty. The more adventurous among the group also opted for an extra adrenaline rush with the vertical drop slide or the stairway to heaven, pictured here.



From March onwards, our young people have kept us abreast of their home learning, creative projects, sporting activities and much more by contributing to the Youth News page in the Ashwell Village News. We look forward to getting together again as soon as we can do so safely.

For more information about Asheteria or any other youth events, go to www.stmarysashwell.org.uk/youth, see village notice boards, or email me

Jo Adams ✉ adams561j@gmail.com



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CHARITY GROUPS



Ashwell Quarry Nature Reserve

Herts and
Middlesex



It was another interesting year in the reserve, encouraged by weather of various kinds. The wet winter put more moisture back into the chalk, which appeared to

help our chalk plants whose deep roots are adapted to seek out water from deep down in dry conditions. The cowslips were fantastic in April and May.

Conversely, the hot and sunny weather in the early summer benefited butterflies: Orange Tips, Small Heaths, Small Tortoiseshells and Meadow Browns were all present in good numbers. The Orange Tips, we hope, laid lots of eggs on the abundance of Hedge Garlic plants which have sprung up in several places. Later in the summer, our Chalkhill Blue butterflies returned and there were at least 20 males fluttering around looking for their more elusive females.

We also had a good show of Pyramidal Orchids, Clustered Bellflowers, Milkwort and the late-flowering Devil's Bit Scabious.

Volunteer work parties re-commenced in September, when we started the autumn scything and raking. Once again, though, we were helped enormously by the tractor and mower which cut most of the flatter parts of the reserve. This saves us hours of toil!

In October, the Herts Mammals Project leader came to put down small mammal traps to see what species live in the reserve. These are 'live' traps which are stocked with tasty food and dried grass for bedding, firstly to attract mice, voles and shrews to investigate the traps and then to keep them comfortable overnight until the traps are checked the next morning. All twenty traps had caught

a mammal which was an excellent success rate. There were Wood Mice, Bank Voles, Field Voles, Common Shrews and, most excitingly, one Yellow-necked Mouse – a rare species in the county.

Our work parties take place on the third Sunday of the month from 10:00 am until about lunch time. Please contact me if you would like to join in, so that numbers can be controlled and enough tools brought along.

Don't forget, visitors are always welcome in the nature reserve. A free permit lasts a year and allows you to go for a walk around at any time.

For more information, please get in touch.

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CHARITY GROUPS



Remembrance 2020.

The Royal British Legion



Some years ago, there was a national meeting for local poppy organisers and we saw a video for the launch of the Royal British Legion's new strap line 'Live On'. There are many who still think 'Lest We forget' and at Remembrance time we certainly don't forget, whilst we also look to the future. In the Ashwell and District Branch, we always remember the 54 names of local men who died in both World Wars by placing a cross for each of them at the War Memorial. Other villagers always add crosses to remember those special to them. In 2020 our Poppy Collection raised less than previous years at close to £1600, with house-to-house collections not allowed. However, we set up a stall on Carters Pond on two Saturdays – all with safety considerations in mind.

During the year other activities that we have previously made part of our fundraising calendar were also cancelled but not of course our Remembrance Sunday service in St Mary's, which with appropriate altar decoration took place whilst participants used Zoom.

There was also a Scouts' Act of Remembrance where 'In Flanders Fields' and 'For the Fallen' were both read before a representative from each section laid their poppy spray.

We all hope that 2021 will be different and enable us to plan events so that we can celebrate the Royal British Legion Centenary on Friday May 21st, VE Day on June 6th and VJ Day on August 15th as well as a Remembrance Dinner in November. Let's all hope that that does prove possible.

Whilst so many know all about the Poppy Collection leading up to Remembrance Sunday and November 11th and give generously, there are many poppy items available for sale all year round on-line at the Poppy Shop. Inevitably, however, with monies raised being lower this year and with the support needed for serving and ex-servicemen and women remaining similar, there will be strains to the support that can be given. As a Branch we hope that by combining all the amounts collected we can continue to support those who we must not forget as well as helping so many to 'Live On'.

Andrew Gillborn ☎ 742730 ✉ andrew.gillborn@btopenworld.com
Membership enquiries ✉ secretary.trlbashwell@gmail.com



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CHARITY GROUPS



Diapalante



For Diapalante and many other charities 2020 was a busy but very different year. In Senegal the Centre was unable to run

its normal classes and activities from March until November, when it re-opened only to face a further two-week closure when Diapalante's risk assessment required Master P, the co-ordinator, to isolate.

Coronavirus hasn't taken off in Senegal, but the last week of 2020 showed a marked increase in cases. A long and enforced lockdown, now relaxed, brought hardship – no work, no money. However, the year brought so much malaria and typhoid, that coronavirus generally seemed a distant nightmare, as illustrated by the experience of Master P and his family. When their close friend and next door neighbour recently caught coronavirus she was immediately isolated in hospital by the government. There was no apparent spread and no isolation of contacts other than that enforced from here to protect the Centre's members. However, during in 2020 Master P caught malaria twice, his pregnant wife was hospitalised with malaria and typhoid and as she left hospital their four-year-old daughter was admitted with malaria and typhoid. A month later the new baby was born with malaria. All are doing well now, but when they consider health issues, coronavirus doesn't seem the major threat.

Though the Centre was closed for much of the year it wasn't long before people began to take advantage of the situation to do various small group activities that don't fit easily into its normal timetable. An artist led a group of members brightening up the Centre's walls with murals. A school inspector taught a group of members to read and write in Wolof, their mother tongue,

rather than the French used in school. It was amazing to hear the liberation people felt as they produced their first descriptive or poetic writings in their native language. Following this success, the Centre is planning to teach the talibés, young male street children, to read and write in Wolof. The Centre ran a further small group project where some of our returned gap-year volunteers, in the UK, co-ordinated a Senegalese storybook production project. Centre members wrote storybooks about everyday life in Senegal. These stories were then illustrated by volunteer illustrators in the UK and published on africanstorybooks.org.



Meanwhile, we shared the funding nightmare of many UK charities. Our normal fundraising events all had to be cancelled. With the Community Education Centre in Senegal closed, and life and work in turmoil here, how would we persuade people to fund an Education Centre that was not open? Fortunately for us, you were very generous and understanding and sponsored our various activities: colouring our hair, participating in wacky sports, from Senegal, Master P, in a Zoom presentation, crossed cultural boundaries and cooked the family dinner for the first time in his life! Thank you to all whose kindness and generosity have brought us through the year. We hope 2021 will be a better year for everyone.

Liz Chandler 📞 743091

Christmas Card Shop

Despite the coronavirus, the charity Christmas card shop opened its doors again for Christmas 2020. We had a meeting in September and decided how we would proceed under the restrictions then in force. When we opened in October everything was in place for a safe opening (though only two customers were allowed in the shop at a time). This all came to an end in November, with the government's lockdown allowing only necessary shops to remain open. We opened for two weekdays before the lockdown came into force but then closed. Only for a weekend, though, as we quickly reviewed the situation and set up a Facebook page with an online 'catalogue', allowing customers to 'click and collect'. Later, we printed the catalogue for those who were unable to get online. We were able to open again 'Covid-normal' for the last 3 weekends.

All in all, despite being a bit of a roller-coaster, this approach seems to have worked very well and our customers proved grateful for the efforts we made to be flexible. As a result and, as a result of people's need to keep in touch at a difficult time, we had a financially very good year, with sales of Christmas cards totalling well over £2,800 across the twelve charities - the best in recent years! Once again, we had a very wide choice of card designs, some unique to the shop, and they proved very popular.

We've been running now for well over 20 years and during that time the shop has become a small part of Ashwell's village community. We are very grateful for all the support we receive from people in Ashwell and surrounding villages. Despite the restrictions, people have been enormously supportive even though we didn't function quite so well this year as a social hub. We did, though, enable you to support good causes and, by sending the cards to your friends and family, continue to raise awareness about the work of the various charities.

As always, we would not be able to do this without the individuals who, on behalf of the charities, supplied the cards and gave their time to staffing the shop at the weekends.

Liz and I are always pleased to welcome people to 'The Old Post Office' at the corner of Kirby Manor as a proper shop for a couple of months of the year. If you support a charity and would like to be involved next year, please 'phone Ian before September.

We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021.

Ian Chandler ☎ 743091

Ashwell's Fight Against Cancer



2020 was an unusual year for all of us and so AFAC's fundraising had to be put on hold.

We postponed our coffee morning indefinitely and realised that our annual Golf Day would have to be deferred until this year. A new date was to be set for around September. The Golf Day is always thoroughly enjoyed by all participants, rain or shine, for golfers are a hardy breed and can usually take most things that are thrown at them by the weather gods.

Despite our lack of social interaction, I am delighted to report that many of AFAC's supporters donated generously, either through a JustGiving page or by personal donations popped through my letter box. Just over £800 was raised in this way and my thanks go to all of you who made this possible.

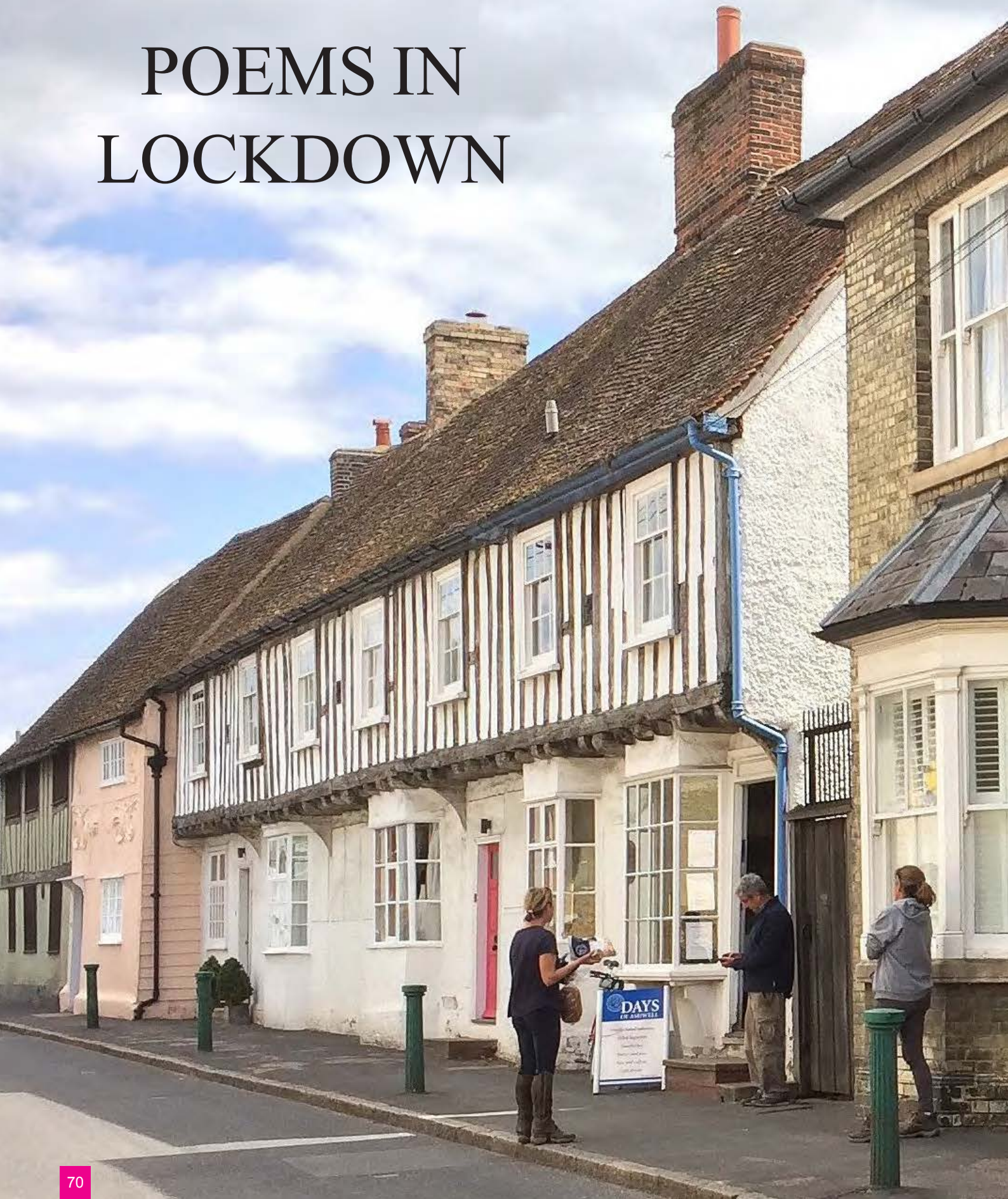
Thanks to the skills of three Ashwell artists, Jo, Jill and Christine, I was thrilled that our AFAC Christmas cards were on sale again last year. When lockdown occurred just before the third weekend of being open, Ian Chandler's computer skills meant the Charity Card Shop went online during this period and so very little income was lost.

Our targeted fundraising for 2020 had been for research into Pancreatic Cancer at Addenbrookes so it is intended that the roughly £900 raised will go forward into this year. This cancer is one of the most difficult to diagnose in its early stages and then, once identified, it is usually too late for successful treatment. With your support we can ensure that money will be directed to the right people and the right place at Addenbrookes giving hope for the future. 2021 A GOOD YEAR FOR ALL!

Christine Scholfield. ☎ 742136

✉ christinescholfield@hotmail.com

POEMS IN LOCKDOWN



A Selection of Lockdown Poems from Ashwell Women's Institute

Determined to keep in contact during the lockdown, Ashwell WI members have been meeting via Zoom, thanks to Margaret Budgen's willingness and ability to be at the helm.

O Margaret, you lifted our gloom
For your smile lit our hearts and my room,
Your technical skills
Are much better than pills.
Thank heaven for you and for Zoom!

Ann Vidler

Ann's tribute to Margaret expressed the thoughts of many of us.

We have our brains were kept ticking over by quizzes from Jenny Gadd. We have devised various word games, pondered stories composed entirely of quotations, and received a specially illustrated president's report. But most of all we have turned to verse to express our feelings, often adapting familiar poems, as you will see from the selection which follows.

Margie Wallace, President, Ashwell WI

In Splendid Isolation

Oh dear, what can the matter be?
All these old ladies locked up individually,
We'll be here from Sunday to Saturday,
Missing our W.I.

There's Margie in charge, Kate, Ruth, Lynda and Ann,
Karen and Liz, Sue, Margaret and Jan,
With Sylvia and Sally from the Wolverley clan:
They're all members of W.I.

We don't turn on the news 'cause it's all too alarming
Try pilates and yoga – it's supposed to be calming,
Now we're knitting and quilting – some even do darning!
For the husbands of W.I.

We wait for the postman – now a man is in sight!
Should we kidnap the milkman and give him a fright?
But he keeps himself safe by delivering at night
To the members of W.I.

The trades folk of Ashwell have all come up trumps
With deliveries from Day's, Trudi, Brian and Crump's,
Plus Farm Shop and Garage, still manning the pumps
For the members of W.I.

One day when it's over and we meet again,
We don't know quite where and we don't know quite when
But be certain we'll celebrate properly then
With all members of W.I.

Chris Pickett

In the Beginning

I've made a list of things to do!
I've actually done one or two.
Next on the list is an awful chore
Means kneeling on the kitchen floor.
I'M CLEANING THE OVEN - my knees do ache
Perhaps, when done, I'll bake a cake.
But now I'm down, I can't get up!
I can see the kettle, I can see the cup.
It'll be a while for me to rise
And reach that sweet delicious prize!
A cup of tea, some petit fours -
And remember, I'm only on number 4!

Jenny Gadd

The Lament of a Lady Who Lunched

(with thanks to the Rose and Crown)

Oh, how I miss the calls to ask if I'm free
To go out and about for lunch or for tea.
Cafés and pubs, garden centres and such,
We went to them all, and ate far too much!
We pondered on matters beyond our ken
And drank too much wine to help with our Zen!
We gossiped at length about all and sundry
And made a date for the following Monday.
Yet now all our outings are sadly all gone
Until this is over, we're so woebegone!

But there's really no point in ranting and raving -
Just remember to count all the money we're saving!!

Jenny Gadd

Leisure

(with apologies to William Henry Davies)

What is this life if, full of care,
We now have time to stand and stare?

Time to stand in contemplation
Of tasks requiring concentration.

Time to gaze up at the ceiling
And realise the paint is peeling.

Time to keep our social distance
And offer the elderly our assistance.

Time to teach our children lessons
Interspersed with P.E. sessions.

Time to put our trainers on
And go out for the daily run.

Time to plant tomato seeds
And clear the flower beds of weeds

Time to see in broad daylight
The garden birds all taking flight.

When squirrels advancing at great speed
Devour all their sunflower seed.

Time each day to hear the news
And listen to the experts' views.

Time for endless pointless questions
But oh, please spare us Robert Peston's!

Make time to stop the endless stressing,
By counting each and every blessing.

This time will pass and we'll get through
And re-unite with loved ones too.

We'll meet and greet our friends once more
And welcome them through our front door!

A poor life this if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.

Chris Pickett

All on a Covid Evening a Thursday in April

Almost 8 o'clock, a lone bagpipe is
Wailing at The Springs
Otherwise in the falling dusk
All is deathly hush.
The houses of Ashwell
Are sleeping.
Up Angells Meadow
A family of five musicians
Stands in their garden:
The Goldscheiders,
Mum at the helm with violin.
Quietly they begin to play
'Somewhere over the Rainbow'
It's 8 o'clock,
Clapping starts
And just as soon fades.
Listeners and neighbours are distanced
Up the road to hear
The trumpet, violin, two flutes and the French horn... Ben
The music dies away...
Amidst the sadness and fear, we've been given
A few supremely sane and perfectly moving moments.

Sue Birch

What's Missing

I really miss my little bus
 (I'm trying not to make a fuss)
 Often said, without it, I
 Would fall apart and pipe my eye.
 Well, now the worst has happened and
 I cannot ride as I had planned.
 I miss the banter erudite
 And even some that's not so bright.
 But it's the party at the back,
 With thermoses and crisps and snacks –
 That's what's missing from my week!
 A social whirl is what I seek.
 So let me say "Cheers and good health!"
 (I've started talking to myself...)

Ann Angus

Maud

Come into the garden, Maud,
 There's nowhere else to go
 We cannot go on Annie's bus
 All we might do is swear and cuss
 But we will grit our teeth and show
 How brave Ashwellians stem the flow
 Of boredom, loneliness and rest
 By writing poems, not just in jest,
 But thoughtful, wise and full of hope,
 To prove to all that we can cope.

Ruth West

Cowslips in Isolation

(with huge apologies to William Wordsworth)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 All by myself, as I'm allowed.
 When all at once I saw a friend,
 Exercising round the bend,
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Singing and dancing in the breeze.
 She called to me to join her there
 Among the cowslips bright and fair.

Later, sitting all alone,
 Isolated in my home,
 I thought of all the joy we'd had
 Skipping and jumping in the breeze
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Among the cowslips in the mead.

Mary Rutter

Go, lest they chase thee...

Go, lest they chase thee screaming from these hills.
 The police patrols are out in force today.
 So, unless you're getting groceries or pills
 They'll fine you and won't let you out to play

You stay at home, away from everybody,
 And hope to get your groceries online
 But you have to wait a lot,
 If you hope to get a slot:
 Last time I looked, it was 2029!

You intend to keep the house all neat and tidy
 And Hoover all the mess you've left behind
 But as you sit eating pizza
 And pour another spritzer
 Those intentions are the last thing on your mind.

The list of jobs you need to do is endless
 And clearing out the garage is just one.
 You open up the door,
 As you've often done before,
 Then decide you'd rather sit out in the sun.

Thursday is the night to thank our carers
 And clap our hands for all those special friends
 We owe them such a debt
 But it isn't over yet
 So we'll clap them every week until this ends.

Chris Pickett

You look ill, Mr William

“You look ill, Mr William,” the young nurse said,
“I think it is time that we got you to bed.
An excess of gin – or was it that port?
When you finished the bottle I knew you’d get caught
With a hangover such as I couldn’t cure.
A headache, blurred vision, you’ll have to endure –
Paracetamol helps, but Brian has run out.
If it all gets too much, just give me a shout,
And I’ll puff up your pillow and cool your hot brow –
But that’s all that you’re getting, as I’m off duty now!”

Ruth West

When steeped in gin, my memory goes

If it hasn’t gone already
And my gait becomes more *f-a-l-t-e-r-i-n-g*
And walking becomes unsteady.

I think the easiest thing to do,
With no-one here to scold me,
Is pour another one or two...
And let the night...
 e-n-f-o-l-d...
 me....

Chris Pickett





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A photograph of a stream with concrete blocks and ivy. The stream flows from the top left towards the bottom right. The banks are covered in brown earth and small stones. Several large, rectangular concrete blocks are scattered along the right bank, some partially submerged in the water. On the left bank, there is a dense growth of green ivy. The water is clear, reflecting the sky and the surrounding environment.

OUT AND ABOUT
IN ASHWELL

Ashwell Walks



Ashwell Walks is a series of free podcasts, written and voiced by Sally Fletcher and edited and produced by Diane Jacoutot, that brings Ashwell's long history to life in an engaging way. Podcasts are like radio programmes - you can listen to them whenever you want to on your smartphone, tablet or computer. *Ashwell Walks* is designed for smartphones, which you can take with you as you follow the historical trails through the village. It's like having your own personal tour guide and it's all free.

Sally Fletcher has lived in Ashwell for 18 years. Passionate about anything old (yes, anything), she works in the heritage sector and has a PhD in Archaeology. For her, Ashwell is endlessly fascinating, so she was thrilled to be asked to share some of the village's history with you through *Ashwell Walks*.

Diane Jacoutot has lived in Ashwell for four years. She has worked in the fields of technology and education and conceived the idea of downloadable *Ashwell Walks* as she roamed around the village, thinking "I wonder what the history of that building/tree/road is. I bet there's a story to tell..." and...

- Why did Ashwell have over 30 pubs?
- Why are there so many edible fruits and berries along Ashwell Street and Partridge Hill?
- When is the best time to pick them?
- What is the history of the mill wheel in Mill Street?
- Who was the 'witch finder' of Ashwell?
- And why was he so dastardly?

All these questions and many more are answered by Sally as you enjoy the walks with her. It's a great way to appreciate the long history of the village and get some gentle exercise doing it. You can find *Ashwell Walks* on iTunes, Spotify and Google Podcast apps on your smartphone, and you can also listen from our website at:

<https://ashwellwalks.weebly.com/>

Diane Jacoutot ✉ dj@edvectus.com



More Walks For Outdoor Lovers

If Sally Fletcher and Diane Jacoutot's podcasts have whetted your appetite for taking in the great outdoors, or you just fancy a change from the familiar four walls around you, why not also try some of the walks on the Parish Council website?

Regular walkers will be familiar with these routes and the stopping-off points, but for others they offer an ideal chance to explore what lies just beyond the doorstep. Then if you fancy turning a stroll into a social activity, there are many walking groups in the area, for example the Border Ramblers, whose column appears on page 92 of this Yearbook.

<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/ashwell/walks-from-ashwell/>

Meeting Sarah and Owen Lloyd-Fox



Taking your exercise round the village is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and usually offers the opportunity to have a bit of a (suitably socially distanced) chat. If you meet someone new, all the better. Last November I met Sarah and Owen and found that here is a couple you will be interested to hear about if you don't know them already...

Me: *What is your connection with Ashwell? How long have you lived here, what brought you here and where were you before?*

Owen: After years of city life (London, Leeds and Budapest), events conspired so we urgently needed to find a place to live while expecting our first child. And it was actually a childhood memory that brought us to Ashwell: Sarah remembered coming here for a school trip when she was eight or nine and looking at the graffiti in the church, Gardiners Lane's thatched wall and the Springs. So, we came to walk around and we were both bowled over by how beautiful it was – and loved its community feel.

We've now been here for a little over eight years, volunteered for numerous village events and have two boys at Ashwell Primary School, so feel very much at home.

Me: *Tell me what you do.*

Sarah: I am a Developmental Neuroscientist studying how babies' brains develop as they interact and experience their world around them. The core of my current work is to understand how poverty impacts early development - both in this country

and in Africa- optimising brain imaging tools to study early development. I have recently taken up a new research fellowship at the University of Cambridge and now focus on developing tools that can be taken into the home and community to bring research to families directly. This year, this has mostly centred on understanding the effect of Covid-19 on expectant families and those with new babies, and trying to provide better support for Generation-Covid families.

Owen: I'm a Writer. I currently write for *Coronation Street* and *The Dumping Ground* for CBBC.

Me: *How did you come to your job? Was it by chance or did you always plan to do it – or was it perhaps a bit of both? Was it difficult to break into your career?*

Sarah: I had no idea what I wanted to do at school; my A-levels were as diverse as they could be - photography, art, maths and biology - and as soon as I mentioned to my teachers that I wanted to take a gap year to volunteer in Central America all careers advice dried up in a heartbeat! I applied for six different types of degrees including Italian, Anthropology and Environmental Sciences but in the end chose Psychology and Zoology and absolutely loved it. Ever uncertain, when I left university I worked in a winery, a restaurant, undertook council childcare surveys, worked as a classroom assistant and then finally started a role in research. Once I began working as a research assistant at Birkbeck, University of London, I quickly grew to love the way research constantly evolves, and the opportunities it provides to learn new things alongside people who are so passionate about their work.

Owen: I've always been a huge fan of TV and film and loved performing and writing, but I left Uni with no real idea of how to pursue a career. After spending a fair few months applying to everything in the Guardian Media section - and writing to pretty much every production company in the country - a friend, who had beaten me to one of the few graduate opportunities available, let me know that they were looking for a work experience runner for a company she was working for. So, in a word, nepotism. But, given it was unpaid work on a terrible and morally dubious hidden camera show for Channel 5, it wasn't as if she had handed me a multi-billion pound contract or anything. After a couple of months standing in the rain bringing coffee to depressed and

soggy crew members, I was able to convince a TV drama company that I had the transferable skills to be an office runner. The quality of work didn't improve much (still making coffee, lots of photocopying) but at least this was under a roof. Aside from photocopying and coffee-making, the company was overstaffed and under-commissioned, so I spent most of my time messing about with the other runners and reading scripts. The latter fortunately led to a job as a script reader (drama companies pay you a nominal amount for a script report on one of the hundreds of scripts they're sent) and then, a couple years later, a researcher on *Holby City*. At *Holby* I was finally working with writers and producers - and scripts that were ACTUALLY being made! As a researcher, you would ring up surgeons and ask them (occasionally mid-surgery) to provide you with authentic medical dialogue and action. Even now, I'm pretty sure I could blag a midline thoracotomy. Eventually, I was taken on as an assistant script editor, and then a script editor - and then, moving to Leeds, I script-edited on *Emmerdale*, where I was eventually given the opportunity to be a writer.

Me: *What do you find interesting, challenging and rewarding about your job? Are there any downsides?*

Sarah: I love my work for the breadth of knowledge and diverse ideas that I hear and learn about through interactions with my fellow researchers and the families that we see. In particular, it is so rewarding being in a job where we find out new things that we didn't know before. For example, one of my favourites is to tell expectant parents that from their baby's first breath of life, they will recognise their mother's and father's voice through hearing them before they were born.

As for the most challenging thing, most of the time it is the tyranny of a bulging inbox of unread messages and feeling guilty I can never find enough time in my life to get everything done.

Owen: Particularly on *Corrie*, I love writing characters. The diversity of stories I get to write (given it goes out six times a week) is really exciting. I also love working from home although this year the story-lining process has been more challenging while we all have to stay at home. On soap, the writers will meet once a month in a big room and thrash out the following month's stories before going away to write the individual episodes and having

thirty-odd people on a Zoom call isn't half as much fun as heading up to a hotel in Manchester!

Me: *What about the future?*

Sarah: I love what I am working on right now. There is always something to learn and new things to discover. I only hope that my work in the long-run can support families and provide better opportunities for parents and their babies to thrive wherever they are from.

Owen: I'm happy to work on *Corrie* for as long as they'll have me but I do find working on other shows helps me avoid getting stuck in a creative cul-de-sac (literally - although obviously the street is actually a cut-through). I love writing children's TV, genre stuff... anything really, and hope I continue to have the chance to write as many different projects as possible.

Me: *Finally, if we see you out in the village, what do you think you will most likely be doing?*

Owen and Sarah: Chasing about after our two boys on a walk, up a tree or after a football. Or on the Saturday morning village-shopper trinity (bread from Days, newspaper and a Beano from the village stores, roast for Sunday from Crumps). Oh, and our favourite events in Ashwell - the Book Sale, the Summer Fair, Advent windows, we could go on...

This year, more than ever, we've felt so lucky to live in this community. The village's response to the pandemic has been wonderful, from the generosity of those involved in the Pantry and local shops to the absolute joy of the Halloween and Guy trails, helping to cushion the blow of a tough year for the little ones. One of the best things to happen to us this year was to hear that two of our closest friends have decided to move to the village, having been won over by the welcoming feeling they've had from our friends and the community whenever they visit.

I feel that the events of 2020 have inspired us to hold on to and appreciate our neighbours and local community more than ever. We love you Ashwell!

Norton Mahy, interviewer

OUT AND ABOUT ASHWELL



How to Save a Village Pub

Change happens to all villages. Ashwell is no exception and we are seeing our fair share of change. In recent years we have seen two shops on our High Street convert to residential use. Increasing property value will only encourage more such conversions — placing our pubs at risk of being considered ‘prime real estate’.

Although Ashwell once boasted more than twenty pubs and two commercial breweries, we are fortunate that we still have three working pubs in the village. It would be a shame to see these remaining landmarks of our village community simply sold off as lucrative housing developments.

There is a way for villages to take some control of this and the first step is to have each of our pubs listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This process lets us nominate any building that has a main use of furthering the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. Once they have been listed with the local authority, we will be informed if they are put up for sale. We can then enact a Community Right to Bid, giving us a six month window to put in an offer to buy.

This is exactly how our neighbouring village of Guilden Morden rescued their 300-year-old ‘Three Tuns’ from being converted for property development. Greene King closed the pub in 2013 and a

few years later the building and gardens were due to be developed into homes. An action group of local residents, alongside their Parish Council, listed the pub as an ACV and were given the six months to raise funds.

With support of the Plunkett Foundation, a charity dedicated to helping community businesses, and resolute campaigning work, they raised £250,000. They were able to cover the bid price of the building, carry out much-needed refurbishment, find new tenants and successfully open as a free house in 2019.

ACV listing is no guarantee to save our pubs from being turned into flats, but it is the first step and makes it a little harder for the developers. Pubs are a crucial part of the fabric of our community. They provide meeting places and bring friends together, but can also provide somewhere to sit and strike up a conversation helping combat loneliness for those who otherwise would be isolated.

There are many of us in the village community who do not want to see our pubs disappear and we shouldn't wait until it is too late. If you are interested in helping, please get in touch.

David Linsley ✉ dave.linsley@gmail.com

This article is based on pieces previously published in the Ashwell Village News.



Mid-air Crash over Ashwell

In July 1941 a Wellington bomber was on a training flight which took off from Bassingbourn. The crew of eight, including the pilot, Flight Sergeant Hannah, was from the Operational Training Unit based there. If you are ever able to go into the Control Tower at Bassingbourn you will see a map on the wall which shows the incredible number of air bases in East Anglia at the time and also the flat land in front of the tower, from which planes landed and took off. Bearing in mind this density of air bases, it is hardly surprising that there was so much enemy activity over the area.

On the night of 21st July 1941, a Junkers 88 with pilot Heinz Volker took off at 23:30 from his base in Holland. He was regarded as a very successful pilot. He and others had already shot down a Wellington about to land at Bassingbourn, which collided with another; also, one about to land at Steeple Morden and, even later, another at Bassingbourn.

That night he headed to England, flew over the Wash and then turned to head towards Newmarket where he was spotted in the beam of a searchlight and subsequently flew much lower – believed to be about 700 feet.

It was after midnight by then and one can only wonder where the Wellington was at the time and what its eight crew from the Operational Training Unit were feeling – excitement, trepidation, worry, concern – who knows?

By now the Junkers was speeding on its course for Bassingbourn where it had been on previous raids, looking for any bombers returning to base after their raids. At 01:25 one of the crew in the Junkers shouted to Volker that he had seen a huge shape

in the sky nearby, identified by its flaming exhaust. This was Wellington R1334.

The next five minutes must have seemed an eternity as the Junkers fired on the Wellington, which suffered damage although taking avoiding action. However, the flames from the Wellington apparently unsighted Volker and the Junkers came too close – they collided over Ashwell and the Wellington came down in a field known as Hunts Close, a field off Ashwell Street, looking north towards Lucas Lane.

Because of all the factors like speed and weight, the Junkers came down not far away in a field known as Red Bank Field on the southern side of Ashwell Street. There have been several archaeological digs in these fields, with pieces of the aircraft unearthed. Some are in our Village Museum. All involved in the crash were killed. Four members of the Wellington crew are buried in Bassingbourn and, whilst the crew of the Junkers were originally buried there, later their bodies were removed to the German Military Cemetery at Cannock Chase.

All of this may well be news to many in the village. However, there are villagers who do remember it and particular thanks go to Fred Bryant who first alerted us to it at a Royal British Legion Meeting.

Hunts Close may well gain planning permission for housing development in the future and it is our hope that some commemorative memorial will be placed there to remember this tragic event.

For detailed information, see the October 2001 issue of 'Treasure Hunting' by J Evan-Hart and eye-witness information from villagers, children at the time on www.ashwell.gov.uk/wellingtoncrash

Andrew Gillborn and David Sims

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD





Lizzie reporting in south Beirut, Lebanon, May 2020. Credit: Hasan Shaaban.

Building Homes: Lizzie Porter reports from Lebanon and Iraq

How many ways can you build a home? In my case, four, at present. There is my calm, mid-century second-floor flat in Beirut, Lebanon, which I share with my dear friend Leila and our dogs Freddie and Bunduq ('hazelnut' in Arabic). That home was badly damaged in the enormous chemical explosion that ripped through the Lebanese capital this summer. The blast tore out the elegant old window frames, and left the brown wooden door in large splinters. But, unlike many others, we were lucky. We had enough of our home left to be able to rebuild it, rather than abandon it entirely. Leila has bought a bougainvillea for the small porch area and a lime tree that stands in a big black pot.

I have two more homes in Iraq, both of them new this year. As so many people were losing their jobs during the pandemic, I was lucky enough to be hired as senior correspondent for Iraq Oil Report, a well-reputed news outlet on energy, politics and security. I had been reporting freelance in Iraq on-and-off since soon after leaving the UK over four years ago. The chance to take up a more permanent position in Iraq, while keeping a pied-à-terre in Beirut, has been an immense and wonderful new challenge. So I now also have a relatively luxurious apartment in Erbil, capital of the country's northern Kurdistan region. With friends, I often sit on the balcony with a strong gin and tonic, watching the surrounding buildings glow pink as the sun sets. Sometimes, Chinook helicopters from the nearby military base fly overhead, which rather spoils the peace. But Erbil is relatively safe: the Islamic State group, which once controlled a third of Iraqi territory, has been beaten back into rural pockets.

Then there is my home in Baghdad. It's a city that, in the words of Iraqi poet Dr Walid Sarraf, 'grew old' and where, 'the Tigris river

dried up as the earth's sorrow saddened the sky' – and yet which is endlessly alluring and fascinating. Its residents – Baghdadis – often simultaneously love and hate their tortured, spirited city. My home here hints at its past, perhaps dating from the British occupation in the early 20th century. It is a solidly-built thing, a double-fronted townhouse in whitish brick, with high ceilings and steps at the elevated back entrance. Sadly, too many of the buildings like this in Baghdad have now fallen into disrepair, their owners forced to flee during the decades of violence that Iraq has endured. My heart aches as I drive past such houses, which were once homes. Who used to live here? Who stood on that balcony, now just twisted metal? Who looked out from behind those broken wooden shutters, and where are they now? In what circumstances did they leave?

Having so many places where I feel welcome and comfortable can be discombobulating, but it is, of course, an enormous privilege. That I can move between them relatively easily, coronavirus restrictions notwithstanding, is a fortune that I'm very aware of. I'm surrounded by people – some of them acquaintances, some of them close friends – who have been forced from their homes with little choice. Syrians who fled bombing and dictatorship have had to create new lives for themselves elsewhere. In Lebanon, years of government corruption and financial mismanagement have wiped out many ordinary citizens' life savings. The situation is so desperate that anyone with a way out is leaving the country.

I think about these things often. Travelling and leaving home are commonly thought of as exciting choices – and in my case they are. But for too many people, they are terrifying decisions, made only when no other options remain.

Finally, Ashwell is the place I call 'home home.' I left the village before university, and then began my career as a journalist. But Ashwell remains my family home, and one of the only places on Earth where I can really relax. It is something of a refuge. I once

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

returned to the village after an emotionally draining trip reporting on refugees in Turkey. It was a beautiful spring, and the daffodils were out. I burst into tears (I never cry on a job, but I fully believe in a good old wail behind closed doors). Other times, I sit and listen to Ashwell's silence: in Baghdad, the air often chimes with the sound of power generators, which supplement the decrepit electricity grid. Ashwell means dusty bookshelves and family photos and old letters and taking stock and 'having a turn out', as my mum says. It means letting go of the comfort of busyness, and daring to rest.

This has been a year of creating other homes. Each of the four now has its own role, and joys. I treasure each of them.

Lizzie Porter is a multi award-winning journalist from Ashwell, and currently senior correspondent at Iraq Oil Report.

Mark Rowlands reports from Tortola, British Virgin Islands



I was born in 1982 while my parents were living in in Silver Street. I lived in the village off and on until 2010 when I moved to London to begin working as a barrister from chambers in Lincoln's Inn. My family has lived in the Elms, Lucas Lane, since 1983.

My brothers and I grew up in the village. I remember going to playgroup in the village hall and teaching John Biddle how to eat sand. I started Ashwell School and then moved to Kingshott School, where I remained until I was twelve. I joined the village cubs, led by the aptly named Gwen Pack as Akela, and our family were regular attendees at St Mary's, my father being the organist.

I remember summer picnics at the Rectory when Patrick Bright was rector, and the cheese and wine concerts in the school hall at the beginning of the music festival each year, when we'd gorge ourselves on cheese straws, vol-au-vents, and crisps in the classrooms, and try to convince Linda Gee to give us wine.

I later went to Knights Templar in Baldock, showing up on my first day with a briefcase and a Little Lord Fauntleroy accent that was very quickly drummed out of me. I would walk to the bus stop each day with Oliver Gearing, and wait for the double-decker bus in all weathers on the corner of Hodwell. I remember once we knowingly gave false directions to the driver of an articulated lorry who was looking for the A505, sending him down Silver Street and recommending that he then turn right, down Bear Lane. Another time, waiting outside the VG, I threw a snowball at Emma Coote and Charlotte Philip. It missed and went through the shop window.

After GCSEs, I went to sixth form in Cambridge, and then, before university, I took a gap year in which I travelled from Mumbai to New York. While saving up, I worked in a business run from Jane Buxton's spare bedroom. My colleagues were Jane (when she wasn't gardening), Monica Boggust, Bill Toombs, my elder brother Jonathan, and Jane's dogs. Twice a week in the evenings I would drive to Cambridge, have a drink in the Eagle with a friend who worked on the bar, then toddle up Trumpington Street to Brown's, where I would play the piano for two hours before heading home in the dark.

After studying music in Nottingham and working in some jobs I found rather tedious, I trained as a barrister. In 2014 I moved to Mauritius to open a law firm in the Ebene Cybercity, just outside Port Louis, and lived in a little house on the corner of Avenue des Pelicans and Avenue des Toucans in Flic-en-Flac, three minutes from the beach. My brother Jonathan visited me there during a period of unusually high rainfall: each day we had to wade through knee-deep water, as the rain had caused the nearby rivers to burst their banks. Shortly after that, I moved to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, where I have lived ever since.

On 5 September 2017, the day before Hurricane Irma hit, I managed to get on an evacuation flight to the Cayman Islands and, while I was in the air, friends arranged my onward travel to New York. I arrived in Tribeca tearful and weary, but very glad to be safe, and I remained there as the devastation in the BVI unfolded. I immersed myself in relief work, first in bringing media attention to the crisis, and then in Puerto Rico, helping receive evacuees from throughout the Caribbean. My parents organised a fundraiser in the Ashwell Parish Rooms to help support the crisis appeals and, through the compassion and generosity of Ashwell residents, raised several thousand pounds. Tortola having been virtually destroyed, I was relocated to the Cayman Islands until April 2018.

Covid-19 in Tortola has been strange. I am fortunate enough to live in a beautiful house with plenty of outside space. Aside from hurricane season, the weather is sunny and warm, and there are no active Covid cases in the BVI at the time of writing (December). In March we went through a period of intense lockdown: no one (apart from key workers) was allowed to leave their house for any reason, save in an emergency; groceries had to be delivered; and if you wanted any exercise, you were walking circles in your garden, or – if you had no garden – your kitchen. The BVI's 50 or so islands have a population of about 30,000,

roughly 3,000 fewer than Letchworth. For months it was impossible for anyone to come or go, meaning everyone was restricted to an area of 21.5 square miles. Many found this claustrophobic, and the travel ban meant that tourism – an important part of the economy – suffered.

Change is afoot, however, and from 1st December, tourists were allowed to return. My younger brother, Matty, is visiting from 20th December, though the process of entering the territory is demanding. Happily for us, Matty will be allowed to spend his mandatory quarantine period in the house next to mine. After that, he will be allowed to mix with others. He is due to be released on Christmas Day, though if the officials are off duty that day, he may have to sit tight until Boxing Day. If so, I will sing to him from my balcony and throw mince pies, sausage rolls, and morsels of turkey for him to catch. And when he gets the go-ahead, our true, tropical Christmas will begin.

Helena Cairns (née Jenkinson) reports from Summerland, British Columbia

Greetings from Summerland, British Columbia, Canada.

It's been 20 months since I moved to Vancouver, Canada and nine months since we moved to our new home in Summerland. Having spent my early years in Woodforde Close and then later on in the High Street, it feels good to be back in a countryside setting after living in London for almost ten years.

Summerland is a beautiful place on the shores of Lake Okanagan, about five hours' drive inland from Vancouver. It's a sleepy place where agriculture takes centre stage and life seems to revolve around the strange opening hours of the bakery, True Grain (not unlike Day's of Ashwell), the thrift store (an Aladdin's cave) and the dump. Everyone here has a trailer and excessive amounts of tree cuttings, 'yard waste' and general renovation projects that need to be disposed of, and hence the importance of the dump.

Canada beckoned when I met my husband, Robin. As one of his jobs, he has a cider business here in Summerland which he shares with his two best friends, one of whom lives across the field from us with his young family. Our dogs, Finlay and Ollie, have quickly become the best of friends. Or at least that's the way Finlay, our golden retriever, sees it. Ollie tolerates Finlay or entertains him at best, much as if he's an annoying younger brother.

In London I was working part-time as a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in Islington Children's Centres and topped that up with time spent at London's Turning Earth ceramics studio. Since moving to Canada, I have been unable to work while waiting for my work permit and permanent residency to be approved. I have kept myself busy, learning how to restore a second-hand electric pottery kiln and setting up an online ceramics shop. I hope to

return to supporting young children with additional needs once I am able to work again but, until then, continue to potter away the time in my basement studio.



As time goes by, particularly now that international travel has almost stopped entirely, I am finding myself longing for some Ashwell time. It's funny what you end up missing that you didn't expect to. For me, it's beautiful old buildings. It can feel a little soulless without them. Anything built before 1990 is considered old here!

With very much love from Canada. x



GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Bob and San Carswell's Golden Wedding Anniversary



San and Bob Carswell were married on a very hot June day in 1970, in St John's Church, Dormansland, Surrey, followed by a reception in the family home in Dormans Park. Because of Covid-19 restrictions their celebration 50 years later was a much more low-key affair at their home in Ashwell.

San grew up in London and Dormans Park, and Bob in the very south of New Zealand. They met at the University of Sussex where San was programming the university computer and Bob was studying for a D. Phil. They lived in Manchester, Arizona and London before moving to Ashwell in late 1977.

Their three children were all born after the move to Ashwell, went to Ashwell Primary School and then on to Knights Templar. After many years in computing San took on local employment in the Post Office for a while. She is still active with the Ashwell Guides. Bob has also formally retired but still goes in to his old department at Cambridge University when circumstances allow.

Peter and Françoise Chapman's Golden Wedding Anniversary



Peter and Françoise Chapman celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 5th September 2020.

They met initially in 1966 as students doing voluntary service in Austria. Two years later they met again in Françoise's home city of Paris where she was studying law and Peter was teaching English. They married in 1970 at St Germain des Prés and settled in Cambridge.

Peter's teaching career took him first to Royston, then Maidenhead and in 1982 to Baldock and The Knights Templar School where he was Headmaster until 2006. Françoise, having first been a volunteer at Letchworth Citizens' Advice Bureau, was its manager until 2004. They have lived in Ashwell since 1983 and are the proud parents of five children and grandparents of ten, whose ages range from six months to 22 years.

Celebrations have had to be put on hold but plans are afoot for a grand gathering as soon as circumstances permit.



David and Carys Roberts' Golden Wedding Anniversary



As students in the mid-sixties, Carys and David first met on Cardiff station that is too long a story for now, but suffice to say, it was neither a *Brief Encounter* nor love at first sight! However, Cupid took over some months later, and on 25th July 1970 they married in north Wales, at Rhos-on-Sea Methodist Church, and honeymooned in Paris.

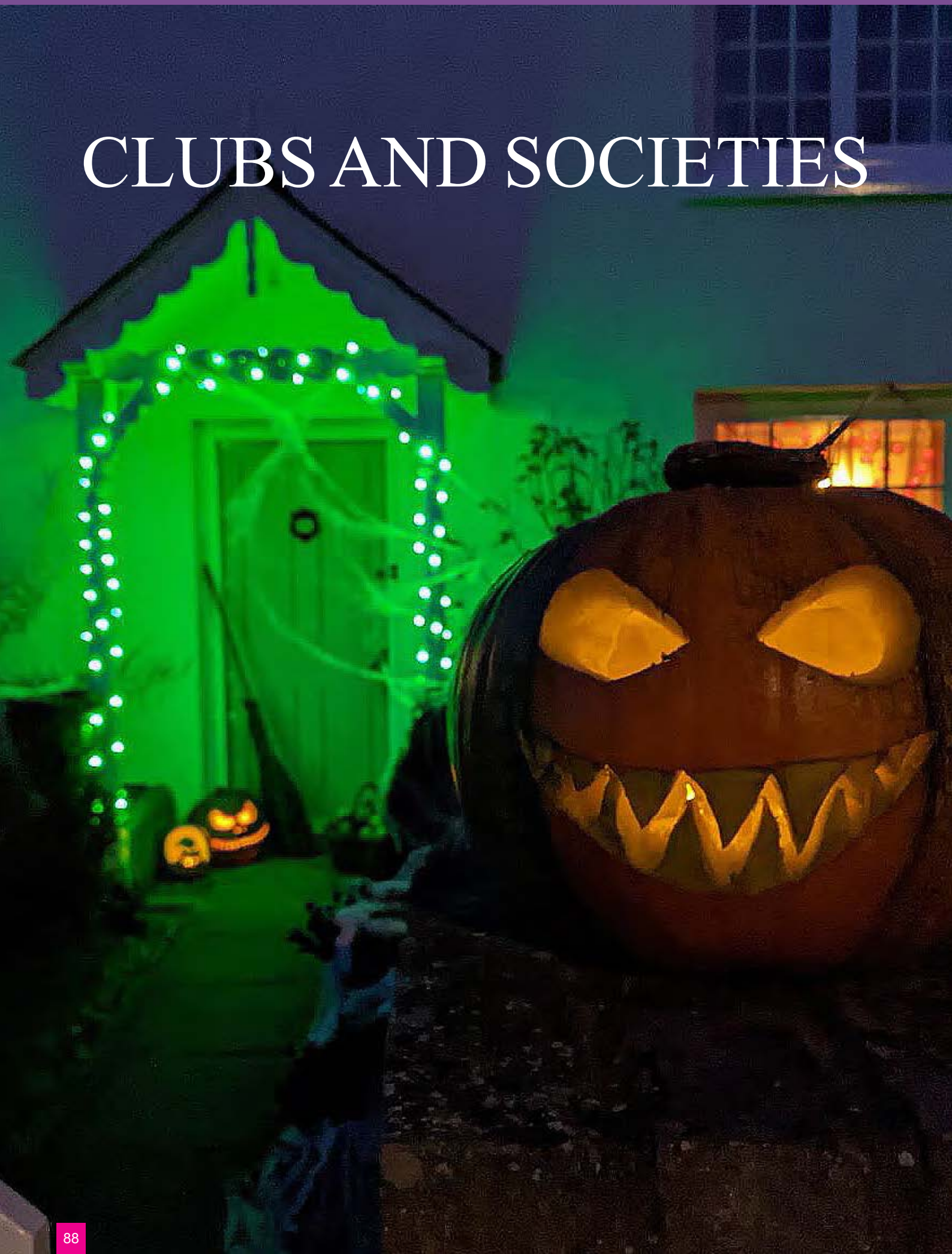
Fifty years on, during the Covid-19 pandemic, they celebrated their golden wedding, socially distanced of course, with daughters Anna and Katharine, their husbands and five grandchildren. Although on the day it rained incessantly, being surrounded by their family and aided by lots of champagne and canapés, the celebration was filled with laughter and a few (joyful) tears.

In the evening they enjoyed a romantic dinner for two from The Arbury, after which they had time to view and enjoy a set of delightful Kate Heiss prints, a gift from the family. A wonderful and memorable day.

Carys and David have lived in Ashwell for more than forty of their fifty-year marriage and consider themselves to be extremely fortunate, living not only in a rather special village but also with immediate family and many close friends nearby.



CLUBS AND SOCIETIES



Ashwell Theatre Club



2020 started off with a bang for the Ashwell Theatre Club – our production of *Babes in the Wood* was our best-selling pantomime ever, with almost every seat sold out every night. It was directed by the

hardworking team of David Rance and Jo Eggleton Rance, with stage management by Amanda Collinson and starred 32 of Ashwell's finest thespians. Although pantomimes are exceptionally time-consuming because of the complexity of the choreography, singing, acting, music, makeup, costumes and props, we love them because they are multigenerational and allow Ashwell's creativity to really shine. And shine it did!



It was lucky that *Babes in the Wood* was so successful because the pandemic scuppered any further plans for summer productions, so we had an unexpectedly long time to rest on our laurels. However, creative thinking can never be fully suppressed and, with the help of Sally Fletcher, the Club conceived of a unique and safe alternative to traditional Halloween trick or treating, called Halloweenows. This 'production' involved even more Ashwellians than the pantomime, something we didn't think was even possible. But it was.



A one-way system was created through the village and houses along the route were invited to participate by decorating their windows, houses and gardens in an autumnal or Halloween theme. People not on the route were also involved in either decorating a part of the path, acting as marshals or donating sweets. Instead of knocking on doors and trick-or-treating, families enjoyed the trail, interacted with the marshals who were dressed in a variety of costumes and everyone received a bag of treats at the end – a reward for a fun and socially-distanced evening. It was another 'sold out' event and the evening went off without a hitch. The creativity and variety of different decorations was really astonishing, further cementing our belief that Ashwell is an exceptionally creative hub. Everyone involved enjoyed the event and there were even requests to make it an annual occurrence.



Thank you to all of our supporters – we could not have done any of it without you.

Diane Jacoutot ✉ dj@edvectus.com



The Mid-Life Crisis Car Club



The idea of a car club in Ashwell arose in 1992 when Chris Scholfield and Robin Lipscombe looked for excuses to take their sports cars on scenic drives via country lanes, ending with lunch at a pub. Soon, other sports and classic car owners joined us and, as we were all aged over 40, the tongue-in-cheek name of the Mid-Life Crisis Car Club was adopted.

In its early years the club was run informally without a committee. At the end of each run a volunteer would be tasked with organising the following outing. However, membership grew to around 50 and in 1998 a committee was established under the chairmanship of Chris Scholfield.

Since that time the club has endeavoured each year to have an event every month from May to September plus a Christmas walk and meal (the Decoke Ramble). In addition, most years have seen trips further afield. Destinations have included France, Belgium, Holland, Jersey and Guernsey. Closer at home we have travelled to Wales, Scotland, the Cotswolds, the New Forest, Yorkshire and the Lake District. In 2020 we had hoped to visit the Malvern Hills, combined with a tour of the Morgan car factory but this was put on hold because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

We did manage to hold our AGM, Film Night and Dinner at the Three Horseshoes in Willian just before the first lockdown. We watched an excellent film about Grand Prix racing in the 1950s and the rivalry between Peter Collins and Mike Hawthorn, during

a period when the average life expectancy of a Formula One driver was less than five years!

We hope we can get together in 2021 to enjoy club activities once more. The committee has drawn up a programme which will commence with a scenic drive through the lanes of Hertfordshire, concluding with Sunday lunch.

At present we have over 40 members whose cars range from a 1946 MG TC to a 2020 Morgan Plus Six and include amongst others Boxsters, 911s, MX5s, MGBs, Jaguar E Types and VW Golf convertibles. New members are very welcome. All you need is a sports car, a classic car or a convertible. Further details are available on our website www.midlife-crisis.org.uk

Robin Lipscombe ☎ 742584 ✉ robinlipscombe@aol.com



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Detail of a grotesque on St Marys Church. Photo by Margaret Budgen.

The Womens Institute



2020 was another successful year for Ashwell WI in spite of everything. Margie Wallace continues as our president and Margaret Budgen has been the technical driving force behind much of this year's programme.

Our Christmas lunch in the URC Hall, was enjoyed by all, a sumptuous meal provided once again by Liz Chandler, ably helped by Viv Hollow. All profits went to support the charity Diapalante.

The New Year began with an excellent talk by Andy Gibson from the British Schools in Hitchin, which was to be followed up by a guided visit but unfortunately circumstances overtook us. In February Bernadette Merry, from the National Westminster Bank, came to give us some tips on how not to be the victims of scams. This is when we had to postpone our normal programme.

But we were not idle during lockdown. We kept our brains active with quizzes by Jenny Gadd and we had a lot of laughs in exchanging poems (see pages 71-74), word games, quotation stories and cartoons via email. Zoom now came to our aid, with Margaret Budgen ably at the helm, although most of us had never even heard of Zoom beforehand. Thanks to Margaret's patience and technical skills we have continued our committee meetings when the weather has not allowed us to gather in what must be the most beautiful garden in Ashwell. Subsequent main meetings have made Zoomers of us all.

Margaret herself gave two very interesting talks: one about her impressions of two separate visits to Costa Rica, 20 years apart; and the other introducing us to Dr Elsie Widdowson for whom Margaret hopes to organise a blue plaque in Barrington. Our first outside speaker on Zoom was Cheryl Brightly who told us about the development of chocolate from bean to bar and thoughtfully sent samples in advance.

Particularly enjoyable were two meetings when members contributed short talks or anecdotes from their own lives. We came away feeling we knew each other a little better.

We have held recently the first meeting of the WI-FI Club where members discuss a film that our president has previously chosen.

The official WI calendar this year includes a photo taken by Margaret of a 'Grotesque' in Ashwell Church, giving visual expression to our feelings about the virus. Until normal service returns, Zoom will enable us to continue our excellent programme for 2021.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month, except in August. Come and join us on Zoom and see what we have to offer. We are very keen to make new friends. Here's hopefully to another successful if slightly less unusual year for Ashwell WI.

Sheila Hogan, Secretary

✉ shogan_uk@yahoo.co.uk



Around Newnham Hill. Photos by Ken Coyne and Norton Mahy.

Border Ramblers



We started our rambling year with the now traditional New Year's Day trip to Arbury Banks and most of the regulars turned up. The February turn-out was also good, with a prompt 2:00pm start from The Three Tuns out towards Ashwell End and beyond, the route partly on roads, quiet at this time of year.

Events were already taking effect by early March but we decided to try a full day walk. Finding that the Three Horseshoes was open, we booked our lunch beforehand. The morning ramble took in the countryside towards Hinxworth and on arriving at the pub we found a sign, "This is a 200-year-old pub and you do your own risk assessment before you come in". We ate in the garden and, after a great lunch, carried on in a circuit back towards Ashwell.

By April we were in the 'maximum six' rule and this was observed in our trips out, which became more informal, rather than official walks. This carried on throughout our glorious summer weather. Now that we have covered all the public paths round the village, organising events is fairly easy but, by introducing various permutations, I can still surprise my regulars into thinking they have not done this one before.

One memorable outing in August was out towards Litlington. The forecast was not encouraging but we started with dry weather though under threatening clouds. These got more menacing as we headed towards the US Airforce Memorial just outside Litlington

but it looked as if we would miss the storms which we could see all around us. However, as we started back towards Steeple Morden the heavens opened and the road became a river and we had to stop and find shelter near trees and bushes. About half an hour later the rain abated and our sorry party carried on, drying out as we headed back to Ashwell Street and home - definitely a walk to remember!

By late summer and the easing of restrictions, we had informal rambles, helped by the glorious weather and our wonderful countryside. These continued into the autumn. Thanks to Norton and Ian for helping.

Our informal, impromptu walks continued into the winter in spite of continuing restrictions and deteriorating weather. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to get out beyond the confines of the village.

When we can officially start walking again I hope to welcome both regulars and newcomers. If you want to join us just turn up (details posted each month on the notice board by the Rose & Crown) or contact me if you need any more information.



Path from Newnham Hill to Caldecote, June. Photo by Norton Mahy.

Ken Coyne ☎ 743723 ✉ kencoyne@hotmail.co.uk

Rose and Crown Folk

Ashwell's folk session, now 26 years old, started in December 1994 with a charity "Sing-along-a-thon" to raise money for the church tower.

2020 started out so very well... despite The Rose & Crown being closed over Christmas, they opened-up specially for our January session, albeit with only bottled beer. It was a good night and so it was for February and March (with proper beer on again). Then we hit a brick wall.

We weren't able to meet again for the rest of the year. In April we tried using Skype - a complete disaster - but by May we had got organised using Zoom. This did allow us to meet and to see some of our old friends from other parts of the country (particularly Norfolk) but the fact that it's impossible to join in when someone performs on Zoom only underlined the true social nature of our usual pub sessions. Although we have had opportunities to chat and to have a drink together, it really isn't the same.

It's perhaps particularly poignant as we were expecting to have a really big year in 2020. We were looking forward to performing for the Music Festival, during Ashwell at Home and at Revels on the Rec in June (among a number of other things). None of these things happened. Julie did release a single of her new song and Mike and Ian are working on a 'lockdown collaboration' album, though this is coming on slowly.

For 2021, we'll continue to have Zoom meetings until such a time as we can get back to our normal activities. We still have a different theme for each month. We don't really take too much notice of it but it gives the evening more of a focus than it would otherwise have. Look out for the posters on the noticeboards and inside The Rose & Crown. We also have a Facebook group at: facebook.com/groups/RoseAndCrownFolk

We will eventually meet on the first Monday of every month from 8:30 to 11:00pm in the bar of The Rose & Crown. The sessions are very informal and everyone is welcome. You don't have to be musically talented or confident though it helps if you are inclined to join in.

The Committee are (from time to time, and in no particular order): Mike Holmes, Jon Stark, Brin Siller, Sarah Talks, Ian Chandler, Ken Hollow and the Murtons.

Ian Chandler 📞 743091

The Ashwell Horticultural Society

The Ashwell Horticultural Society continues to look to the future, seeking new ways to engage with our members and keep our aims at the heart of all our activities. Our objectives are to inspire, educate and entertain in the art and practice of horticulture and conservation, in order to benefit the local environment and the well-being of the residents of Ashwell and surrounding communities, and people with a connection to Ashwell.

2020 brought huge challenges to so many people. As a Society we have missed our monthly meetings since April and have had to cancel open gardens, shows, trips and opportunities to meet with each other.

In February Ian Friars enthralled us with an amazing tour of the gardens of Lausanne, showing photographs he had taken during his time of ministry in the church there. We were treated to Swiss chocolates and cheese during the evening. Thank you, Ian, for a wonderful start to our meetings in 2020.

In March we welcomed John Roper and Colin Adlam from Friends of Danesbury Fernery in Welwyn. They talked about their work recovering and restoring a Victorian fernery. The presentation was both fascinating and educational and prompted us to think about visiting Danesbury Local Nature Reserve in Welwyn some time in the future.

We were unable to host any events from April to December owing to the current circumstances, but the good news is that all of these events have been moved forward to 2021 and all our speakers have been rebooked. Sadly, we weren't able to hold our AGM, Gardeners Supper and Members Evening in November but we plan to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting when it is safe to do so. Regular contact with our members is vital, mostly by email, letter and submitting photographs of our plants and gardens. Members are also encouraged to use our website. We continue to seek new methods of communication and ways to meet as a society within the government guidelines and current restrictions.

Please check our website for up to date information:

ashwellhortics.btck.co.uk

Margaret Gilliam 📞 742040

✉ andmgilliam@btopenworld.com

Ashwell Mummers



Ashwell Mummers performers. Photo by Ian Chandler.

Ashwell Mummers' nineteenth Christmas tour of Ashwell was performed on 10th January 2020, as usual starring The Dragon and, as usual, collecting for Helping Herts Homeless (North Herts Sanctuary). The Bushel & Strike was closed as the landlords had left, so we once more performed at The Waggon & Horses in Steeple Morden.

The children's performance, at The Three Tuns for the first time, was well attended and very popular, with Father Christmas (aged 2019) distributing a sackful of presents as usual. Attendance at Wolverley House was slightly down on last year, though it's always interesting as most of the residents know the play at least as well as the mummers.

Moving out of the village, we performed at The Waggon & Horses in Steeple Morden to (what is becoming) the traditional great acclaim before returning to Ashwell to perform at The Rose & Crown for our final performance. The Rose & Crown had opened specially for the Mummers' Play and was well attended. As usual, the audience was very enthusiastic and most people stayed on for the party afterwards.

In all, we collected £240.72, which we sent to Helping Herts Homeless. This brings our grand total to almost £4,800 over the 19 years.

For 2020 we were lacking a Beelzebub but otherwise had a full cast, including Rachel, a new and very successful Little Devil Doubt.

We have been unable to do anything more in 2020 (despite invitations) owing to the Coronavirus outbreak. The 2021

(Christmas 2020) play will also not happen as, at the time of writing, we are in the midst of a 'Tier 4' lockdown. However, for 2021 we have produced a 2mins 25secs video, including our song and a slideshow of photos of past performances. We're hoping that people will use this as an opportunity to donate to Helping Herts Homeless so that we are able to contribute as usual via our performance. If you'd like to see the Youtube video, the link is: <https://youtu.be/L99xI2VHZNM>

The donation page for Helping Herts Homeless is: <http://helpinghertshomeless.org.uk/donate/>

For up-to-date information, follow us on our Facebook group page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AshwellMummers/>

If you'd like to know more about Ashwell Mummers, or the various Mummers Plays we perform, or if you would like us to perform at an event you are organising, please get in touch.

Ian Chandler 📞 743091

Ashwell Jazz



As with many groups, our monthly meetings came to a halt in April 2020. We have missed both the social evening and the opportunity to listen to an hour-long jazz programme put together by one of the group on a theme of their choosing and then, after a short break, listen to numbers on the same theme brought by others.

To keep some activity going, the monthly programmes have been produced and distributed using Dropbox. The difficulty has been for those who find it difficult to use the technology. On a positive note, it has meant that we have kept going. We look forward to starting the meetings again in 2021 when we will once again listen to jazz and enjoy each other's company.

If you enjoy jazz, want to know more and want a relaxed evening once a month we will be meeting at 59 High Street on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm as soon as we can. You will need to bring your own refreshment. There is no charge.

David Short 📞 742385 ✉ david@merchantflock.co.uk

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CHURCH AND CHAPEL



Ashwell Parish Church



2020 was an extraordinary year in the life of St Mary's. We began the year with the celebrations of Epiphany, Candlemas and Ash Wednesday and just managed to get in a very successful Flea Market before the Covid-19 lockdown happened.

We immediately moved the 10:45 am Sunday service on to Zoom, streaming initially from Robert's dining room, and also provided pre-recorded YouTube worship. In May we were allowed to re-open the Church for private prayer, Zooming services and for the Parish Pantry. In July we recommenced worship in Church, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing while continuing the live-stream for those who could not get to Church. In August we were able to have a socially distanced choir singing and were just beginning to feel we were approaching a degree of normality when the second lockdown was announced. Fortunately, we were able to fit in a very moving Eucharist for All Souls before this, at which we lit a special candle for the victims of Covid-19. Inevitably, worship in Church over the Christmas season was reduced and curtailed.

We are extremely grateful to Guy and Hilary Mackenzie who mastered the Zoom technology and got us up and running with it. Also, a big thank you to Ben's Coldstream, the choir, John Rowlands and Judy Catterick who have worked hard to ensure we were able to enjoy as much music as possible during the various permutations in our worship.

In August we were able to commence work on the reordering of the north west corner of the Church to provide better toilet and kitchen facilities, largely financed by a generous donation from Eric and Audrey Gurney in memory of their daughter, Claire.



Re-ordering of the North West corner.

On 18th October we said farewell to Rev'd Robert Evens and his wife Caroline as Robert retired from front-line ministry. We were very sorry to see him retire but so grateful for his ministry and to Caroline for all her support and for her work such as re-founding the Mother's Union. We wish them both a very happy retirement. On the same date we said a big thank you to David Richards who was our churchwarden for seven years and who undertook exemplary service in the role. As always, we are extremely grateful to everyone who works, both seen and unseen, to make the Church such an important place for worship, fellowship and so many other activities.



Robert and Caroline Evens.

Mark Eaton, Reader ☎ 743451
 📍 www.stmarysashwell.org.uk

Robert and Caroline Evens

After the morning service on Sunday 18th October David Richards, on behalf of the St Mary's congregation, made a presentation to Robert Evens on his retirement as Rector of Ashwell. Robert served as a priest in St Albans Diocese for twenty years, the last five and a half in Ashwell. His wife, Caroline, has played an important part in Robert's ministry and together they have been wonderfully friendly and welcoming in their ministry in the Benefice (Ashwell, Hinxworth and Newnham).

Their arrival in the Benefice brought to an end a ten-year period of unsettled times, with too many vacancies and strained relations with the Diocese. On his arrival Robert, with Caroline at his side, was the right man at the right time.

Robert's ministry in Ashwell brought several welcome innovations. There is now more interaction between the parishes that make up the Benefice. There have been annual retreats (to the Yorkshire Dales, the Isle of Wight, Walsingham, and Holy Island). We have a re-established Ashwell Mothers' Union branch, flourishing under Caroline's leadership. The Parish is successfully twinned with Mazzafarro, a parish in the Marche, Italy. All these positive developments have been introduced in the last five and a half years.

Robert and Caroline immersed themselves in village life and are well known to parishioners who are not regular members of the St Mary's congregation. They are familiar to many villagers when shopping, walking between the Rectory and Church or when exercising their dog.

Whilst they are retiring and have moved out of the Rectory, Caroline and Robert are still living in the village, within sight of the Church. Church of England rules will prevent Robert from taking part in parish life until some time after his successor has been in post, but he will continue to be seen out and about with Caroline.

David presented them with a pair of sun-loungers, a cheque and a glasswork 'Tree of Life', crafted by Margaret Gilliam. At an earlier presentation in Hinxworth they received a sculpture of the Risen Christ made by John Mills.

We all wish them both a long, healthy and happy retirement.

St Mary's Church Discoverers and Children's Activities



'Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.'
Psalm 127.

We celebrate this gift by welcoming children as active members of our Church. We find creative ways to teach them about the Bible and the Christian message as well as involving them in our worship. We love to hear the views of our young people and see them grow in faith and understanding. Members of the wider congregation enjoy hearing what the children have been learning about and their sometimes surprising interpretations!

Our Discoverers sessions for children take place during the 10:45 am Sunday service and last about 30 minutes. On the first Sunday of each month we join in the 'Thank God It's Sunday' all-age service at 9:30 am.

Sadly, our usual Easter activities for young people could not take place last year but we were able to hold an outdoor service for families and people of all ages on the theme of 'The Big Picnic' on a lovely sunny day in the summer. Our Discoverers also joined in our pet service in September. Lucy and Isabel brought along their dog, Bramble, to be blessed by Robert.

Our much-loved messy Church events were curtailed last year. However, we held an outdoor event at Christmas: families were invited to decorate an outdoor crib scene for all to enjoy. They were also able to bring stars to be included in our Advent window. We look forward to hosting more messy Church worship in 2021.

Our Church activities are open to all, whether regular church-goers or not. For more information about Discoverers and children's activities please go to our website www.stmarysashwell.org.uk or contact me.

Jo Adams ☎ 01763 241587 ✉ adams561j@gmail.com

Ashwell Food Pantry



Footballer Marcus Rashford was in the news last year, bringing attention to the growing problem of food poverty. It can be a hidden problem because those who are struggling to make ends meet due to a loss of income combined with rising costs don't normally shout about it. It's easy to think that a friendly village like ours doesn't have such problems, but it does.

The Ashwell Pantry was started in May 2020 as a bit of an experiment and we can now report that, at the time of writing, the Pantry is being consistently used – there really is a need. Those who use it are young, old, families and singles, in the village or from neighbouring villages. When we started the Pantry it was in the exposed North Porch of the Church and open only on one day a week. We then moved it inside St Mary's Church where it is today and it is open seven days a week.

The Pantry has relied on volunteers in the village to donate food and money, sort through donations and keep the pantry stocked every day. It needs constant tending. We were given a substantial number of items from Ashwell Primary School as part of their harvest festival. We have also had both large and small donations from friends and neighbours. We have had regular notes of thanks from anonymous users who really do appreciate it.

There has been a worry that we will not be able to support all those who need it if the economy worsens. In order to serve the highest number of people, we have asked the users to limit themselves to six items a day. We can't police it but we have provided information on other resources like the Best Before Café in Letchworth and the Trussell Trust foodbanks.

We also welcome anyone who would like to help. Donations of shelf-stable meals, tinned goods, toiletries, cleaning products, dried foods like pasta (as well as money so we can fill in the gaps) are needed on a constant basis. We have a donation box in St Mary's Church. If you would like to help in any way, please contact us at ashwellfoodpantry@gmail.com

We hope the time will come that a local food pantry is not needed but, in the meantime, we would like to thank everyone who has supported us so far. Together we have made a difference.

Diane Jacoutot ✉ dj@edvectus.com **Ian Chandler** ☎ 743091

Ashwell Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union works through four million members in 84 countries, fighting poverty and tackling family issues. St Mary's branch works on a more local level and, as well as supporting our local hospitals, we have been involved in helping the Hertsmere Women's Refuge by providing new starter packs of household goods for their new safe homes and the Yarlwood Immigration Centre with craft materials and bibles. We have also helped to fund some family holidays and, in the autumn, we were busy making and filling Christmas stockings for the baby unit and children's ward at The Lister Hospital.

The pandemic, of course, affected the number of meetings and speakers we would normally enjoy. However, we did manage to have two at the start of the year. Margaret and Alan Gilliam delighted us with *A Taste of Palestine* and Nicholas Moss OBE enlightened us on *How I got my Gong!* Despite the lockdown we kept in touch with one another and, in September, resumed our monthly meetings which, for the time being, were held in St Mary's Church. We heard from Lizzie Evens, talking about the first women detectives in the NYPD and, in October, Antje Brandtner gave us a first-hand account of the work at Jimmy's, the homeless charity in Cambridge. Then lockdown again ...

Visitors to our meetings are always welcome. We normally meet in the Parish Church Room on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 10:30 am.

Caroline Evens ☎ 743587

Re-ordering of facilities.



St Mary's Church: Improvements and Restoration

Re-ordering of Facilities

Discussions about improving the kitchen and toilets in the church began in 2013 but it wasn't until mid-2019 that agreement was reached on a scheme submitted by our church architects, Freeland Rees Roberts of Cambridge (see illustrations). A faculty – a sort of ecclesiastical planning permission – was made to the Registrar at the Diocese in St Albans and eventually received in June 2020. The PCC was already in detailed negotiations with four specialist builders to reduce the price of the tender to stay within our budget. Lodge and Sons, who did most of the recent restoration on the chancel, submitted the successful tender at £153,688.75 + VAT. Additional costs include architect's fees at 12.5%, ecologist's fees, archaeology fees, CDM fees (Health and Safety), etc. We can recover most of the VAT. Total costs of the project will be in the region of £200,000, depending upon provisional sums for any unexpected problems. We received a large donation from an anonymous parishioner and funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Friends of St Mary's. All the necessary funding was in place before work started. Work was not allowed to start until 3rd August to avoid the bat roosting season. There is a roost in the ceiling of the north porch which we did not wish to disturb.

As much as possible of the old Totternhoe stone flooring in the north aisle is being preserved but a certain amount of new stone is also required. The new panelling on the walls of the kitchen and toilets matches the style of existing panelling in the Church. The integral ramp in the floor of the north porch was

laid in hand-made Burwell pammets to resemble the old, but badly cracked, floor.

The new kitchen will make catering for all sorts of events much easier, with a full-size hob and oven, dishwasher, twin sinks and double drainers, refrigerator and lots of cupboard space. The large servery hatch will make dispensing refreshments easier and faster. There is a separate sink and drainer for the flower arrangers, who also have an adjacent walk-in storage cupboard close by, off the new north lobby. Floor level warm-air heating in the kitchen will make the area much more comfortable, especially during the winter months. Having two toilets will ease congestion during intervals at events such as concerts. The disabled toilet also contains a fold-down baby-changing unit and both toilets will be individually heated. The new internal north door lobby will help seal off the Church from the cold in winter. The floor of the north porch was re-laid to include a ramp and the glass lobby door makes access easier. The whole package makes St Mary's a much more user-friendly venue for the whole community.

Tower Restoration Project

Because of the Covid-19 emergency, the National Lottery Heritage Fund suspended accepting all 'Committee Level' grant applications from March 2020 until early 2021. At the time of writing the Tower Restoration Group is continuing the preparation of our First Phase application for a substantial grant in the region of £2,800,000. Further developments are expected in early 2021, but the restoration of St Mary's tower will have been delayed by at least twelve months.

Mike Taffs Chairman, Fabric Action Group,
St Mary's Parochial Church Council ✉ Mike@taffs.org.uk

Discoveries in St Mary's Church

During building work, a vault was uncovered in St Mary's Church, along with a large quantity of human bones, including those of small children. We are only just beginning to be able to tell their stories.

The floor level of St Mary's church was last altered about fifty years ago. At that time, work in the chancel found medieval floor tiles and parts of stone coffins dating from Saxon times, so when the work in the North West corner started in the summer of 2020, it was not a surprise to find interesting archaeology underneath. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons we were not prepared for the quantity and quality of the finds that were uncovered, literally within minutes of the floor surface coming up.

Any work around a church building is likely to turn up some human bones, given the number of people buried in and around the buildings over the last thousand years or more. It soon became clear that a number of people had been buried here and their remains disturbed when something else was constructed under the floor. What that something was, was revealed when a curving surface of bricks was found only just under the old floor surface. As the archaeologist and builders worked carefully to reveal the full extent of the structure, many more bones were found lying along the long sides of the brick roof of a burial vault, so large it almost filled the space that was the kitchen and toilet until recently.

Before the 1850s, when new regulations prohibited burials inside churches except in exceptional circumstances, people from wealthy or well-to-do families could be buried inside the church. The most important people were as close to the high altar and chancel as possible. The North West corner is the least important place in theory, but someone had the money and connections to have a large family burial vault built here. The outline of the hole cut into the ground was clearly visible and the builders must have built the vault from the inside out, as there was not enough room to stand outside the vault and build the walls. The entrance to the vault was facing towards the main body of the church and the bricks had been set and replaced several times, indicating that people had been interred there at different times.

Vaults are not uncommon in churches. At Ashwell we have several in the Churchyard. These are built in brick or stone usually, and make the space either for an individual or for several

family members to be laid to rest. Sometimes there are shelves, sometimes the coffins are stacked. The bricks of the vault inside the church looked Georgian, possibly from around 1700 onwards. The bricks would have been made locally and looked similar to those used to build the Merchant Taylors School house opposite the Church in 1681.

Usually a vault is marked by a stone called a ledger, which would record the names and dates of those interred within. We have no record of such a stone anywhere close to the vault so the identity of the burials remains a mystery. We very much hoped to be allowed to look inside the vault with a small camera, partly because that corner of the church is very damp and the vault may be full of water. The rules are very strict about examining finds such as the vault and sadly we had little time and no money set aside for a proper investigation. We are hoping to find some written evidence about families and burials from the relevant time.

So, what do we do with the bones found around the vault? The remains were dis-articulated, which means not arranged anatomically in the position in which they were buried. These were earlier burials, disturbed when the vault was built. We believe a smaller Saxon church stood on the same site, and there would have been many associated burials with the earlier building.

The bones have to stay on the church grounds and are being carefully stored while we investigate more about the individuals. There were certainly men, women and children represented, somewhere between fifteen to thirty people. Even more poignant was the discovery of three very small babies or children just inside the North door and one under the floor of the North porch itself. If we think back to a time when stillborn babies or those who were unbaptised were not allowed to have an 'official' burial in consecrated ground, there must have been many occasions when people wished to have their children buried close to the church. Some of these burials are known as 'eaves drip' burials because the water running off the church roof provided a continual baptism. An understanding priest might have allowed someone access to the church to quietly bury a child in a shallow grave in the earth floor.

We are only at the very start of the investigations into these people from Ashwell's history who came to be buried inside the present church. It is going to be very interesting to piece their stories together.

Church Choir

The decades-old singing tradition at St Mary's continues through thick and thin. Morning services are directed by Bene't Coldstream and Evensong by Judy Catterick MBE. For very obvious reasons, 2020 has seen less activity but with no less passion.

The morning choir has a consistent four-part dedicated core membership which is still growing. We welcome new members and if you would like to try us out you have only to ask. Age is no barrier.

In January we sang *O Radiant Dawn* (James Macmillan) to the acclaim of the congregation. This is a 21st century composition, full of emotion and delightful musical suspensions. In Lent we sang *O Salutaris* (Elgar) and *Jesu, grant me this I pray* (Whitlock) – all new pieces to the choir. We strive to keep the music fresh whilst remembering that we can only be stretched so far.

Sadly, choral music got the same prohibitions as everything else just before Easter.

When we were allowed back into church in late August we were one of the first local churches to coordinate online Zoom services, replete with live choral music. Our diet was restricted but highlights included *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* (Wesley), *Lord, let me know mine end* (Greene), *Thou knowest not* (Purcell) and *Ubi Caritas* (Ola Gjeilo).

Our rector, Robert Evens, retired at the end of October and we gave him the send-off he deserved with a rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus (Handel). Happy retirement, Robert. And despite a restricted remit, we still managed an All Souls service, including the very well-known *Requiem* by Fauré and perhaps the less well known but equally poignant, Taedet Animam Meam (Victoria).

Christmas was a time for revelling in whatever we were allowed to revel in. Chorally, this still meant we had a Carol Service and Christmas Day at least. *There is no Rose* (Stopford) was new to the choir and the congregation, and many had not heard *Bethlehem Down* (Warlock) for many years. We kept some traditional carols, of course but, very sadly, congregational singing was not permitted.

My personal thanks go to John Rowlands, our organist, for his tireless support and organ playing. We are so lucky to have him.

Likewise, we are keenly supported by Ken Rooke who plays on Sunday evenings when John is absent. And without the phenomenal work of our two librarians, Sheelagh Bennett and Ros Neat, we would not function. Thanks to all.

2021 will bring us all back together and we shall sing our hearts out. If you wish to join us, please contact any of the below.

Bene't Coldstream ☎ 742288 ✉ Ben.Coldstream@resmsl.co.uk

Judy Catterick ☎ 742635 ✉ Judy@beckets.eclipse.co.uk

John Rowlands ☎ 742758 ✉ john@ashwell.org.uk

St Mary's Church Flowers



Our wonderful team of flower arrangers were all ready to dive into 2020 with enthusiasm to put their talents into practice once again. However, this did not quite happen! After several months the Church did re-open for Sunday services and we were once again able to fill it with gorgeous flowers. We would like to thank all those involved and all those who very kindly made donations.

The highlight of the year took place on Tuesday 13th October when St Mary's Church hosted the Harvest Festival and Installation Ceremony of the Master of the Farmer's Livery Company and we were asked to do the flowers for the occasion, which was a great honour. Liz Moynihan and Lizzie Cree stepped up to this request and filled the Church with some truly beautiful displays.

We are all looking forward to getting back to normal this year and think it will be a busy one with plenty of weddings - here's hoping. If you need to discuss flowers for any Church occasion please get in touch with any of the following:

Caroline Feast ☎ 743233 **Suzanne Humbert** ☎ 742961

Michelle Notley ☎ 742556

The Friends of St Mary's Ashwell

The sole aim of the Friends of St Mary's Ashwell is to raise money for the repair and maintenance of the fabric and contents of our beautiful Parish Church. We are all the beneficiaries of the craftsmanship, hard work and generosity of many previous generations of Ashwellians, often living and working in circumstances considerably more difficult than ours. It is vital that we continue this work in the present for future generations of Ashwellians.

The Friends usually hold a number of musical and literary events during the year. Sadly, we were not able to do so last year for the obvious reason. We hope to be back in 2021 once it is clear what we can and cannot do. Despite this setback, we have continued to attract new Friends and contributors to our work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Friends, old and new, and those who contribute so much to our continuing success. I wish to single out Susan Greenbank whose plant stall outside her cottage raised a remarkable amount of money for the Friends last year, for which we are very grateful.

All are welcome at our events and we look forward to seeing you – we hope - in 2021.

If you wish to join our committee, give a one-off donation to the Friends or become a regular donor, please let me know. Thank you.

Stephen ten Hove, Chairman

☎ 742262 ✉ stephentenhove@icloud.com



paul.norman498@googlemail.com
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United Reformed Church



2020 was a quiet year at the URC but our regular worshippers really enjoyed meeting again with Paul Cooper, one of our favourite local preachers, for our Harvest Service in September. We also held services twice in October and we hoped to continue during Advent with a service each week.

Our hall users' activities were suspended during 2020 but we hope that these will return to a new normal in 2021.

Our treasurer and property steward, Jackie Embury, fully retired at the end of October 2020. Either one of these roles is a large and responsible one but to have managed both of them together for several years has been a wonderful commitment to the church. Fran Gardner, along with two or three Elders will between them look after aspects of the Church's finances and we hope that, by the time that this Yearbook is published, we will have found a person able to take over the day-to-day care of the Church buildings.

We look forward to seeing friends old and new at our services in 2021. Our services will probably not be on a weekly basis as before but, we hope, at least two each month. And we hope and pray that we will be able to resume some of our popular events. The URC membership is now very small. There are not enough of us to keep the Church going either physically or financially without the support of the wider community in Ashwell, so the Elders remain uncertain about our future.

Chris James, Church Secretary ☎ 742684

San Carswell, Hall Bookings ☎ 742757

Zoar Baptist Chapel

SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday 10:30 am and 2:30 pm

Tuesday 7:15 pm

All are most welcome at our services.

We believe the Holy Bible is God's Word, and the message it contains is central to our worship. We use the Authorised (King James) version.

Our services are simple and reverent and are conducted by visiting ministers.

From Our Registers

Ashwell Parish Council

Interments at Ashwell Cemetery

10th February	Margaret Rose Reed
7th May	Hazel Ellen Jones
26th June	Trevor John James
17th September	Leon Frederick Picking
22nd September	Olive Grace Bird
4th December	Diane Jean Marshall

St Mary's Ashwell, Parish Church

Baptism

29th February Everly Grace Stockwell

Marriage

19th September Hamish Loudon and Lucy Herbert

Funerals

21st January	Eileen Tunnard
10th February	Margaret Reed
3rd March	Patrick Orr
16th July	Pauline Brook

Burial of Ashes

1st September Eileen Tunnard

Ashwell United Reformed Church

Funeral

26th June Trevor John James

Ashwell Village News



This feels a little like a hall of mirrors! One Ashwell publication writing about itself within another, both facing similar issues during 2020. Our usual content no longer exists, so it is time for something a bit different, something that is still uplifting and positive in our daily lives. In response, Ashwell Village News (AVN)

has made several small changes. Our number of contributors has broadened, with 20 additional writers, there is a colour cover featuring local artists' work, and subject matter to reflect the breadth of our village life and people.

Many thanks go to our voluntary team, our contributors (both new and existing), our retail distributors and, of course, our advertisers. It is through your collective efforts that we are raising much needed funds for our iconic Church at the centre of Ashwell life. Our Church building is instrumental in our community events (Music Festival, Book Fair, Christmas Fair etc.) and last year, more than any previous year, has shown us how important these events are. Our Church tower is also a comforting sight, illuminated and constant as we arrive back into the village after a busy day: a treasure that needs to be protected.

Fundamental, also, is our environment and what we can do as individuals to protect and rebuild it. Again, this challenge has come into focus with events and shown it is possible to live our lives and also allow nature and wildlife to thrive. We have started on this subject in AVN but will discuss more about how you can help in 2021.

AVN has also moved online (eAVN), which has been a big success. All editions from May 2020 onwards are now available with the online 'bookcase' for FREE at <https://tinyurl.com/Ashwell-Village-News>.

All pages online are in colour and there are 'clickable links' to all the websites mentioned in the articles, including advertisers. eAVN is posted on social media across Ashwell, Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Royston and Baldock. Our readership doubled in total within three months of starting eAVN and will carry on growing. Hard copies will, of course, carry on through the usual outlets within Ashwell as well as Sarah's Farm Shop and Steeple

Morden Post Office.

Like the reflection in the mirror, things change over time, yet many things are fundamentally the same. Our village life has depth and colour which we hope to reflect within AVN. Do contact us with your piece of the jigsaw.

James Boyle, Editor ✉ ashwellvillagenews@gmail.com

Note: Just before yearbook publication, James Boyle stepped down as editor.

Vicars and Rectors of Ashwell

If one researches the vicars and rectors of Ashwell the results are most interesting. There are what you would expect, incumbents who came into the parish, stayed a few years, and moved on as well as those who stayed for decades. There are those who probably seldom set foot in the parish and those who seldom left it.

But there are surprises. Thomas Jane, who was vicar from 1473 to 1485, became Bishop of Norwich in 1499, dying the following year. John Taylor, who was vicar from 1543 to 1548, became bishop of Lincoln in 1552 two years before he died. He held at least two other rectories while vicar of Ashwell, as well as being Master of St John's College, Cambridge. As vicar of Ashwell, he sought compensation for dilapidations for the vicarage. He was also one of the commissioners appointed to draw up the first Prayer Book in 1548.

Taylor's successor but one was George Joye, who was a Protestant who was vicar from 1551 to 1553. When Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, he was charged with heresy and fled to Strasburg. There he worked with Tyndale on parts of the English translation of the Bible. His successor, Richard Rudd or Rude, 1554-1559, i.e. during the reign of Queen Mary, was Catholic in his theology so kept his head. He seems to have lived in Ashwell as he was buried here. His successor was William Dakins who is likely to have been the father of one of the translators of the King James Bible.

Herbert Palmer was instituted in 1623 and remained until his death in 1647. He wrote the first Church of England catechism and was a member of the Westminster Assembly, preaching to the House of Commons. He also ran a school in Ashwell, the accounts of which are recorded in the churchwardens' accounts. As he was out of the parish a good deal, he had a curate, his half-brother John Crow. Crow followed Palmer into the vicarage on the latter's death and remained there until ejected under the 1662 Act of Uniformity. On ejection he was meant to have moved at least ten miles from the parish.

In reality he stayed here and acted as assistant to his successor, Ralph Cudworth, who was an academic at Cambridge and absentee. However, after a few years he moved to London where he died.



Most of the vicars were not on the national stage. Samuel Backler, as curate, was school master at the Merchant Taylors' School. On becoming vicar of the parish, he abandoned the school, much to the dismay of the parishioners who complained to the Company who then dismissed him. Another vicar, Townsend Andrews, had problems with the 'anabaptists'. In a letter to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Lincoln he asked for advice on what he should do about the anabaptists wandering around the Church during services and weddings making comments and refusing to take off their hats. The anabaptists he was referring to were Quakers. We do not have copies of the reply.

The entry in this list that brings a smile to many faces concerns the first vicar we know of, Alan, who was vicar in 1218. He was told to get rid of his concubine.

David Short

Vanessa Jenkinson Reflexology



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EVENTS



Ashwell Music Festival

Shakespeare wrote in *Twelfth Night*, 'If music be the food of love, play on'. Last year the people of Ashwell certainly needed love in such troubled times. I have certainly missed live music of any genre in the village.

Ashwell Music Festival was started by Canon Jack Catterick in 1953. Since that time, the festival has grown from the original concept of a summer school for young people, to involve professional musicians, some with national and indeed international reputations. Historically the festival has been a week-long event held in St. Mary's Church; however, more recently the festival has expanded to include other venues - the United Reformed Church and Ashwell Primary School.

While we continue in the original aims of encouraging both young and local performers, we also aim to attract choirs, bands and orchestras from across the country. The Festival has a proven record of providing high quality yet affordable performances during the week of the events, resulting in a unique arts event for the area. The Festival has wide appeal, attracting an audience from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and beyond. Most importantly, all profits from the event go to St Mary's Church Ashwell, which is so much in need of funds at the moment.

Our plans for an inclusive festival in 2020, to include all styles of music and acts to appeal to all ages, were thwarted. However, Ashwell Music Festival 2021 plans to do just that – provide both afternoon and evening concerts, aimed at all ages from the very young to the elderly folk of our village. At the time of writing this, government restrictions do not allow us to set a date in the future which we would be comfortable planning for; but rest assured Ashwell Music Festival will happen again as soon as it is safe to hold it. Keep your eyes peeled around the village for posters announcing our events and we will endeavour to publicise dates and details in the Ashwell Village News.

However, Ashwell Music Festival only happens because of the effort put in by the Ashwell Music Festival Committee and the band of willing volunteers who appear as if by magic each year. Thank you to you all. Many thanks also to our sponsors, without whose continued support the Music Festival would not be able to go ahead.

Lastly a plea to you all – do you have what it takes to join our small but happy committee? We are always looking for new members, young or old, who would like to become more involved, whether that be in selecting acts, preparing advertising literature, being our online social media guru, helping to run the bar etc. The list of jobs is endless – the only attributes you need to have are a sense of fun and a love of music! For further information, contact me on the email address below.

Tracy Young, Chair of Ashwell Music Festival

✉ Tracy.a.young@btinternet.com

Ashwell Flea Market

On the 7th of March 2020 the long queue outside St Mary's Church (like the start of Harrods' sale) signified the day of the annual Ashwell Flea Market.

It never ceases to amaze me the variety of donations we receive - everything from a futon, seed spreader, antique dinner service, and artist's easel down to the tiniest of ornaments, along with the usual plethora of children's toys, china, mugs, glasses and jewellery. Thank you to all those who raided their cupboards to donate the many items for sale.

Business was brisk, with over a thousand items sold, raising an amazing £1454.87 (an increase on last year) which has gone to St Mary's Restoration Fund.

As usual, the event would not have been possible without the numerous volunteers. They worked tirelessly to get everything ready in the days before and on the day selling and serving tea and coffee, not to mention the momentous task of putting the church back to normal at the end and getting rid of any leftover items, with donations going to various charities.

A huge thank you to all those volunteers for their help and thank you to those who joined us on the day making purchases and enjoying tea and coffee.

See you all next year.

Karen Rogers ☎ 743338

Ashwell Show



The Ashwell Show ground waiting for big things in 2021.

At the start of 2020 the big debate for the Ashwell Show committee was whether to go 'big' and recognise 100 years since the first show took place in 1920 or to celebrate the centenary of the Show in 2021. As events unfolded, the matter was taken out of our hands and so we are looking forward to putting on a special show in 2021 to mark the Show's 100th birthday.

Each year the Ashwell Show hands out around £10,000 to local societies, organisations and good causes in the surrounding area. We know this year has been difficult for these beneficiaries and we are determined to put on a bumper show for 2021 so we can give generously to these great local causes once again. Plans are already in place for what is shaping up to be a fantastic event for 2021. Headliners Extreme Bike Battle are due to wow the crowds with an exhilarating bike stunt show and show favourites, the amazing Falconry Display, are also set to return.

The History of the Ashwell Show

From the beginning Ashwell show has been held each year since on the same site, courtesy of the Sheppard family. There have only been a handful of missed years over this time, owing to war, hand-foot-and-mouth, dog flu and of course Coronavirus. Let's hope the Show can continue for the foreseeable future without any more interruptions.

Ashwell Show started its life as the 'Ashwell Flower Show and Fete', changing over time to the 'Ashwell Horse Show' and later moving towards the Show we all know and love today. An advert from 1938 promises traditional country amusements, together with fireworks, tennis, a darts competition, plus dancing and fancy dress! Maybe something to consider for the coming year's Show...

Share your Memories of the Ashwell Show

We are a forward-looking bunch on the committee, but we do want to take a moment to look back and celebrate those memorable moments from the past 100 years. We'd love to hear your stories and memories of years gone past, and if you have any photos from the Show to share with us we would be delighted to see them and display them at the 2021 Show. Please call Claire Grimmer to share your stories.

Want to Join the Ashwell Show Committee?

If you have any ideas for or time to give to the Ashwell Show then we would love to hear from you. Come and join in the fun and help to make 2021 a show to remember!

To volunteer to help with the Show or join the committee, please contact the Show Secretary.

Gemma Allan, Show Secretary ✉ info@ashwellshow.co.uk

Claire Grimmer ☎ 743677

Ashwell Book Weekend



It was with regret that we decided to cancel Ashwell's annual Book Weekend, scheduled for October 2020. We could see no way of having a successful event whilst ensuring the safety of all our wonderful volunteers as well as the buyers.

I know many of you will have been disappointed. Having exhausted your stock of books over the year since the last Book Fair, many of you will have looked forward to buying more or donating those that you had read.

We hope to be able to run a Book Weekend in the Spring of 2021 as well as in October in order to make up what we missed and trust we can continue with this very successful event for the village. Watch this space!

Karen Rogers ☎ 743338 and **Teresa King**

Hallowindows

Life under lockdown was pretty strange in 2020 and as the Theatre Club couldn't entertain the village from the stage they decided to bring the stage to the village. The casting call went out to club members after it was decided to ambush Halloween and combine it with the tried and tested Advent Windows. Hallowindows was the result.

The creative talent in the village decorated windows, very generous families donated sweets for the goodie bags and all that was needed then were a few actors to entertain the "social bubbles" out and about in spooky Ashwell.

Ghosts, witches and goblins entertained the sell out crowd with around 400 sweetie bags taken home by smiling children. The only 'complaint' was from a father who, on walking down the lane to the Rose and Crown car park, met a witch reading Roald Dahl's stories of Ghosts and Witches. When her sidekick, Ghost, appeared it scared his dog so much it relieved itself on his owner's foot!

Super evening was had by all and here are a few windows:

Jo Auckland



Advent Windows

Ashwell ran a very successful live advent calendar again last year, with a wonderful thirty two properties taking part. Like many things in 2020, the calendar had to be a little different with no unveiling times, gatherings or seasonal refreshments, but many of us were very keen to spread some Christmas cheer and lighten the dark winter evenings throughout the village. There were regular participants like the guinea pigs at Moules Yard

and new additions like the fox at Swan Street, with diverse, thoughtful, magical and funny offerings from many. Hopefully they all helped to raise a smile and spread a little winter window wonder. The organisers are all very grateful to those who helped to run and promote the calendar and, of course, to those who put in so much work in to make the windows a success. Fingers crossed we can share a mince pie at this year's event!

Kate Haddock



9th December - Rhee House, 4 Springhead



12th December - 57 High St.



5th December - Digswell Manor, 74 High



19th December - 4 Moules Yard



3rd December - 14 Swan Street



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WEATHER AND FARMING DIARY

Ashwell Weather Statistics for 2020

2020	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Rainfall (mm)	32.2	66.0	25.7	34.1	1.8	45.9	52.9	91.6	36.7	97.8	27.6	67.6	579.9
Average rainfall 1976-2015 (mm)	53.6	39.6	40.8	48.0	51.6	55.3	53.7	53.1	50.7	64.9	59.1	55.1	625.5
Days with rain	13	20	14	5	2	15	16	16	9	24	14	22	170
Max. temp. °C	12.4	11.8	18.4	24.2	27.9	31.9	34.3	33.7	27.9	17.0	16.7	13.1	
Min. temp.	-0.4	-2.8	-1.2	0.6	2.3	6.2	9.8	9.4	5.8	5.4	0.4	-2.0	
Days with min 0°C or below	2	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	18
Sunshine hours (Cambridge)	55.4	77.8	146.7	215.2	270.2	185.0	123.1	133.3	152.4	41.4	64.8	50.3	1515.6
Average sunshine hours 1996-2018 (Cambridge)	61.7	76.7	104.3	133.7	158.7	161.7	162.2	141.0	126.9	101.9	72.4	60.5	1361.7

Ashwell Weather in 2020

2020 must be the first year in living memory for which the weather was not the main topic of conversation. For readers who weren't around at the time, it was the coronavirus which dominated our lives and therefore our chat.

It didn't start that way. January was relatively mild for the middle of winter, with only a couple of nights where the temperature dipped below zero. Towards the end, the winds started to get up and this was the shape of things to come. February was windy and unusually wet, bringing three storms which were strong enough to be given names – Ciara on the 9th had gusts in Cambridge of up to 67 mph, followed by storm Dennis on the 15th with wind gusts up to 62 mph, and finally storm Jorge on the 27th with wind speeds up to a mere 35 mph. Interspersed between these was brighter showery weather, so the sunshine hours for the month were about average.

Spring started somewhat unsettled, but from about mid-March there was a spell of mostly dry, sunny weather with warm days and cool nights. This general pattern persisted through April and especially May – the rainfall was lower, and the amount of sunshine considerably higher than average.

It is a total coincidence, of course, that the fine weather encompassed most of the first Covid-19 lockdown period in England, starting on 16th March when the government advised against all but essential travel and contact with others. At that stage the UK death toll from the disease reached 55, and the number of cases passed 1,500. Formal, strict rules didn't come in to place until 26th March, when we all had to stay at home. Almost anywhere we might want to go, apart from food shops, was forced to close. By then there had been 578 deaths from the virus, with a total of 11,568 confirmed cases. Outdoor exercise was allowed, even encouraged, and the fine weather was great for people in Ashwell who could go out into the garden and on socially distanced walks, runs, bike-rides or whatever, but pretty miserable for those cooped up in high-rise buildings elsewhere in the country. Gardens on the whole were in much better shape than usual, and bike shops were one of the few retail outlets that were busy.

The pandemic restrictions eased gradually over the summer from about mid-June, so we could take advantage of increasing freedom while the weather was warm. The spring dry weather continued for just a few days into the summer but was then replaced by a cooler and wetter spell. Both June and July generally had cool and changeable weather with a couple of short hot spells.

On June 25th the temperature reached 31.9°C, and on July 31st the maximum was 34.3°C; but generally daytime temperatures were not far from 20°. August was much wetter than usual, thanks to just a few days of heavy rain – there was just over an inch on the 13th. Before the last week of the month it was reasonably warm, with daytime maxima generally in the low 20s, and nine days above 25°.

The autumn saw schools and universities reopen, with the weather overall being a bit warmer than usual. September saw a mix of warm and colder spells, and was generally dry. October was very unsettled, with rainfall well above average and little sunshine. November temperatures were fairly normal and it was drier than usual.



The onset of late autumn/early winter saw people staying indoors more as the weather got cooler, resulting in a coronavirus case rise, so meeting and movement restrictions became increasingly tougher. December was still quite mild for the period leading up to Christmas, especially for a spell of eleven days when the daytime temperature peaks were rarely below 10° and the overnight lows above 5°. It was sufficiently mild that some outdoor spring and summer flowering plants, such as fuchsia and manuka (pictured), even showed some new flowers. From Christmas Eve onwards, though, we really started to feel the cold, with overnight lows near freezing for the rest of the year (and beyond into January). So, we spent our virus-restricted single-household or support-group Christmas dinners with the house heating on full.

My automatic weather station, which records rainfall and temperature in Ashwell, failed on 18th January and was replaced on 18th March. The figures for the first three months of the year therefore come from a combination of recordings from Ashwell when available, the Cambridge University Digital Technology Group and the Met Office station at the Cambridge National Institute for Agricultural Botany.

Bob Carswell



2020 A Farmer's Year

Bluegates Farm is made up of three enterprises:

1. The arable farming operation.
2. The dairy, 250 milking cows plus young stock.
3. Straw baling, supplying Ely power station with around 10,000 bales per year.

The land farmed totals around 2,300 acres, growing wheat, barley, oil seed rape, maize, sugar beet and grass.

This year has been challenging for farming, as well as dealing with the pandemic. We have been managing excessive rainfall over last winter, followed by prolonged periods of dry in the spring, a virus in the sugar beet, (which dramatically affected yield) and prolonged periods of the village pubs being shut!!

Below is a snapshot of a few of the key events from the year at Bluegates.

February

During February we had the arrival of our new sprayer, with a 280hp engine, 8,000 litre tank and 32m wide spraying boom. It is a very impressive machine: automatic steering up and down the field, automatic shut off, meaning no overlaps of chemical, boom levelling and cruise control - a very sophisticated machine, costing as much as a small family home. It will now be here at Bluegates Farm for a number of years, earning its keep!

March

During March we planted our 330 acres of sugar beet, along with spreading slurry to fertilise the wheat crops. A contractor came

in with a large boom spreader and 5-inch hose, which pumps the slurry from our lagoon to the spreader. The company did a fantastic job and within two days spread 3,430,000 litres of slurry. For those who did not see it being spread, you more than likely smelled it!

Along with this going on, we turned our cows out. It's always a lovely day on the farm when the cows are turned out after the winter. They are very happy to be roaming on the fresh spring grassland.



April

Not every day goes to plan! During April, when preparing land for maize to be planted, we had a track snap on our Quadtrac tractor. Weighing in at 26 tonnes, it's not the simple tyre change you would experience on a car, especially when it is in the middle of a 45-acre field. It took three of us 3.5 hours to jack the tractor up, remove the track, and fit the new one. As the tracks are so heavy, they have to be lifted into place with our farm forklift. After this event we decided to change another track, which was soon likely to fall apart. All in all, a very costly job, with each track costing £4,500.

July - September

During this period, we did all of our cereal harvesting, baling and planted the oil seed rape. We had a good season, with a few wet days stopping play at times. Things were made easier by having a great team, who put in a lot of hard work and effort during a fairly unusual year. With the baler driver coming from Scotland, and a corn trailer driver from Ireland, isolating and making sure everyone was safe was another challenge. Having designated vehicles, gloves, disinfectants and hand sanitiser, we all stayed healthy and got the harvest in.

October

In October, with the wet weather, we were struggling to get much planted. In conditions like this, every opportunity has to be taken day or night. Between myself and drill man James, we managed to drill 427 acres in 28 hours, starting at 5:00 am on a Sunday morning and driving through the night, and into the following Monday evening.

Team work and determination is key in farming, with weather patterns all over the place. We are having weather situations now when we have to react quickly and take the opportunities that present themselves to get the job done.

November - December

The cows have all now moved back into their winter sheds, enjoying straw beds and plenty of winter forage. At this time of the year we are catching up on Estate work: fencing, trimming hedges and trees, and servicing the farm machines ready for the spring workload.

From all here at Bluegates Farm we hope by the time you read this you will be enjoying a happier and healthier 2021. Thank you, Ashwell, for understanding rural life, with large machines, cows walking down roads, and all the smells that come with farming!

James Mitchell, Manager, Bluegates Farm



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THOSE WE
HAVE LOST



Pauline Brook (1934 – 2020)



Anyone who knew Pauline would have quickly become aware of her interest in dogs, usually because she was surrounded by them.

Pauline's interest in animals went all the way back to her early life when she kept mice, looked after the family cat and learnt to ride ponies. This culminated in breeding dogs that were judged to be Champions in their breed, and to the rare distinction of being invited to be a judge at the annual International Crufts dog show. To reach these heights, Pauline developed a significant knowledge of dogs. But at the time what we had not appreciated was her incredible degree of determination and her resilience to the setbacks which she faced over many years while trying to perfect her hobby.

Another significant part of Pauline's life was her career as a State Registered Nurse. When we felt frustrated with schoolwork, she would remind us that if she could become a nurse, having left school with only an 'O' level in cooking, we could achieve anything. Pauline really enjoyed her time as a nurse and when she moved to Ashwell she went back to helping at the surgery.

Pauline also became renowned in the family for her tendencies to drive at speed. On one occasion she remarkably avoided prosecution for speeding at over 100mph by telling the young police officer that she had an urgent need to get to a toilet! She was not someone to argue with. In later life she maintained her desire for speed by racing around the village in her mobility scooter, still complaining that it wasn't fast enough.

The third pillar of Pauline's life was Peter. They had met as neighbours when they were young children living in London. Her family moved away from London, but she and Peter kept in touch. They married in 1956 when Pauline was 22 and remained together for 46 years. Holidays in our early years were no more adventurous than going to Cornwall; but then in 1968 Pauline, Peter and Sarah went to Czechoslovakia to stay with her pen friend, Mitza. Eight days later the Russians also decided to take a holiday in Prague, forcing Pauline, Peter and Sarah to escape across the border by train. This adventurous streak remained, and Pauline enjoyed adventures in her later years with Peter to New Zealand, Canada, Chile and the Galapagos Islands.

Sadly, over the last few years Pauline's mobility reduced and she became more house bound, but still in the company of her two dogs and a new cat. Thankfully, her sense of humour remained, and she would quite often respond with the naughty smile of a seven-year-old, when we told her not to do something. Fiercely independent, Pauline made it clear that she did not want to leave her bungalow in Ashwell and, thanks to many wonderful people in the village, we met this wish.

Pauline will be missed by us all, and we will remember her with fondness and love.

Barbara E Brookbanks (1924 - 2020)

Barbara was born at The Crown pub at Henlow, where her mother ran the pub and her father had a haulage business. Her school days were spent at Grove House at Baldock. She left aged 16 to become a secretary at R.A.F. Henlow for the duration of the war.

In 1947 she married Eric at Henlow Church. He worked for the family's substantial farming and market gardening business, part of which was Bygrave Manor Farm. Initially, they lived at Caldecote, moving to Biggleswade during the year of the Coronation.

In 1961 the farming partnership ceased and a small farm, Whittington Farm, was purchased on the outskirts of the village. It was here that Barbara helped to run the business of growing parsnips and sprouts, which were processed and packaged in a purpose-built plant. The products were then taken to markets in London in the firm's E.R.F. lorry.

It was in 1986 that retirement took them to a newly built house in Back Street. Eric died in 2003.

Barbara was a very active Conservative supporter and an admirer of Maggie Thatcher. At one stage she acted as one of the agents for a prospective parliamentary candidate for the Mid-Beds constituency.

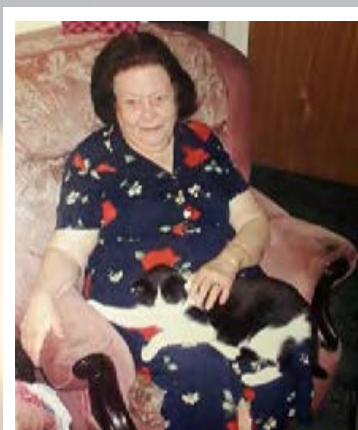
THOSE WE HAVE LOST

Barbara's other big interest in life was the Women's Institute, of which she was a member of for many years. She acted as Secretary for the Hertfordshire branch of the W.I for some years. Sadly, she was latterly precluded from attending meetings owing to having hearing difficulty.

Over the years Barbara contributed to village life by assisting at Merchant Taylors, the School, the Library, Child Health Clinics and, more recently, the Museum.

Her increasing frailty and a serious fall at home occasioned the need for her to have long-term care in a home at Baldock where she spent the last ten months of her life.

Joyce East (1928 - 2020)



Joyce was born in Balham in south London on 25th August 1928. After surviving the blitz, she enjoyed her younger years ballroom dancing and ice skating with her best friend. During this time, Joyce started courting Patrick, whose house backed onto hers. Soon after they were married they made the decision to move away from London. Initially they lived in Hinxworth and then later in Ashwell.

Joyce and Patrick (better known as Paddy) first lived in Silver Street, but finally settled in Dixies Close where they had their three children, two boys and a girl. Their daughter Patricia died at an early age.

Paddy worked for many years at Borg Warner in Letchworth, whilst Joyce cleaned houses in Ashwell, one for over twenty years. The couple were active members of the Royal British Legion and had many friends in the village who were always popping around to their house. Sadly, Paddy died in 1988 but Joyce stayed in Dixies Close until 1997 when she moved to Wolverley House, joined by her beloved cat.

Joyce soon made many new friends and settled down to an active life in her new home. She enjoyed, among other things, coffee mornings, bingo, mini-bus trips, soap operas, knitting, reading and jigsaws.

While she was at Wolverley House, Joyce met and married James East in 2000. They had eight happy years together until Jim died in 2008. True to form, Joyce kept herself as active as possible going for a pub lunch whenever she could at the Waggon and Horses.

Joyce died on the 29th September 2020 in the Lister Hospital. She was the centre of her family and is greatly missed by her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Carol Hare (1941-2020)



Carol was born in Hucknall, Nottingham, on 23rd October 1941 to Bernard and Katherine Gent. She had two sisters, Judith and Vickie. She was educated at Mansfield Technical College. At the age of 20 she became the youngest Crown Postmaster in England. Carol married John Hare, the love of her life, on 2nd September 1961.

Carol and John moved to Hertfordshire in 1964 as John was working in Hitchin. They found some land and decided to design and build their own home together at Bury End, Pirton. After some tuition from John, Carol became a part-time bricklayer, plasterer, and general all-round builder! She also had a full-time job as chief cashier at NatWest Bank.

Carol moved jobs to Broxbourne to take over the post office, turning it into one of the largest in the area. Later, Carol semi-retired, owing to her friend being murdered in his post office, and she and John purchased a rundown thatched cottage in Holwell. Carol rolled up her sleeves, helping John to turn it into a beautiful home. Carol always wanted to be a teacher, so she went to Hatfield College

to obtain her teaching degree and then taught accountancy at Stevenage College for ten years and at Knights Templar School.

Carol and John moved to Ashwell in 1987, renovating and extending their home. Carol joined the village Horticultural Society,

and they divided their time between Ashwell and Spain, where they had designed and built a villa to retire to. Many happy holidays were spent in the sun, sampling the local wine. Carol and John always loved travelling, especially adventure holidays away from other tourists, visiting Turkey, Africa, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and India among their destinations, loving to experience other cultures. Carol learned to play golf, making good friends. She was director of two companies here.

Carol loved Ashwell, which was the place where they had lived the longest. In her late sixties, Carol joined the group of gardeners who look after the Cottage Garden adjacent to the museum. Her main concern was inappropriate planning and building in the village, on which she campaigned and fought for 33 years to protect Ashwell.

Carol passed away soon after their 59th Wedding Anniversary, on 30th October 2020. Carol had a happy, adventurous life and always put other people first. She will be sorely missed by not only John and their family, but by all who knew her.

Trevor James (1947 - 2020)



Trevor moved to Cuffley in south Hertfordshire when he was five years old. Here he discovered natural history by exploring fields and woods close to home. With school friends he went bird-nesting, the results being recorded in annual 'reports'.

After attending Hertford Grammar School, Trevor studied English Literature at York University but without any idea of what he would do afterwards. With an interest in books, he obtained a Library Diploma, which led him to employment with the Department of the Environment Library, by which time he knew he had made a false start! A chance meeting with friends from York led to a successful appointment as Keeper of Natural History at Hitchin Museum.

This was the beginning of Trevor's long career in managing and sharing biological information. He worked at the Museum from 1973 until 1990, collecting and curating natural history specimens and developing an information service for the general public.

He met Chris in 1977 and they married in 1979, living at 65 Back Street, Ashwell. In 1985, they moved across the road (with the help of Chris's brother and a sack barrow) to number 56. Their son Edward was born in 1987.

Also in 1979, Trevor became 'Recorder' for plants in Hertfordshire, an amateur position. Years of field survey led to the publication of Trevor's first book *The Flora of Hertfordshire* in 2009. For about twelve years, Trevor led natural history trips for *NatureTrek*. Chris and Trevor also travelled widely together, always in search of the special wildlife of other places.

In 1990 Trevor became Director of Hertfordshire's Biological Record Centre, continuing the work he had begun but on a county-wide scale. Hours of field work provided information about Hertfordshire's important wildlife habitats, which could be used to protect special places from damaging development. In 2001 he left the HBRC to work with the National Biodiversity Network Trust at Monks Wood, near Huntingdon. Here, among inspiring and enthusiastic natural scientists engaged in wide-ranging research, Trevor's role encouraged amateur enthusiasts across the UK to record and share information. He was lucky to continue in this work until his retirement in 2014. In recognition of his contribution to the study of natural history in Hertfordshire, Trevor was awarded an Honorary MSc Degree by the University of Hertfordshire in November 2014.

Meanwhile, Trevor had also developed his secondary interest in beetles. With the help of friends, he published his second book *The Beetles of Hertfordshire* in 2018. In March 2020 Trevor was presented with a British Empire Medal, in recognition of his services to wildlife conservation. This took place just in time. For six years, various cancers had gradually taken hold of Trevor, despite major surgery. He died peacefully at the Garden House Hospice on 5th June. Ashwell people will remember Trevor as an Elder at the United Reformed Church and on his regular walks around the village, spotting plants and beetles.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

Maria Lukianowicz (1942 - 2020)



Maria was born in the Ukraine in 1942 and came with her family to Ashwell in the early 1980s. She was well known to many of us. What perhaps many Ashwellians were unaware of was that Maria had fled Ukraine with her parents during the second world war, suffering considerable hardship, horrors and privations before finally settling in Britain. Her father was a doctor and poet and her mother a world-acclaimed composer and musician. Maria was influenced by this background as well as by her elder sister Zoya, who is an artist and opera singer. Owing to the war, Zoya had been separated from Maria in their early years but since Maria came to Britain they have always remained very close. Zoya lives with her family in Switzerland.

Maria had two daughters, Charlotte and Larissa, who both attended Ashwell and Knights Templar Schools. As they grew up Maria became a governor of both schools, roles which she took very conscientiously for many years.

Her other interests in the village were the wine club and tennis club, while also pursuing a lifelong interest in art, theatre and exhibitions. Her knowledge of opera was extensive and one of her last wishes and plans was to enjoy the live screening of Beethoven's *Fidelio*. Of course, she was not to know that owing to coronavirus this never took place. Her claim to fame was that while doing her PhD at Wolfson College, Cambridge, she became the first female cox of their rowing crew.

Maria valued her Ukrainian heritage and maintained many traditions, including the language. She idolised her grandsons who were born in 2015 and 2018, and she followed the careers of both daughters with great interest. When Maria died suddenly on 9th January the family were very shaken and have appreciated the kindness and support from the neighbours, friends and residents of Ashwell who knew her.

Patrick 'Paddy' Ian Orr (1933-2020)



Paddy Orr died on February 14th, Valentine's Day, at the grand old age of 86, deeply missed father to Sasha and Simon, and adoring husband of 54 years to Caroline.

Paddy had an extraordinary life, filled with adventure and exploration, always pushing the limits. He lived and loved fiercely, always to the fullest. He had a brilliant, sparkling intellect, often uncompromising, very particular, always decisive.

He loved the outdoors and was an accomplished skier and skilled mountaineer, with several first British ascents under his belt across the European Alps.

Paddy was also a true romantic, with a great love of poetry and literature.

He played the classical guitar beautifully and his guitar music, often Spanish flamenco, would fill the family house.

Above all his Irish wit and sparkle, his dancing blue eyes, his deep sense of generosity and kindness, were never far from the surface. Paddy was the best and bravest of men – a true gentleman as so many have described him.

Paddy was the direct descendent of William Orr, the first martyr for the United Irishmen, hanged for distributing inflammatory pamphlets in 1797 – standing up for the truth and what he believed was right, just like Paddy. He was also a cousin of Phil Orr, former Irish Rugby Captain, and many other well-known Irish Orrs...

Paddy was born in Thonon-les-Bains, the eldest of three children, on the shores of Lake Geneva. His father, Donald 'Dondy' Orr, was an Irish Presbyterian Missionary. His mother, Olive Rosa Orr, a concert pianist. Paddy grew up in Haute Savoie, the family leaving when the Nazis came through the Chamonix Valley during World War Two, returning to Albertville after the war.

Paddy went to boarding school in Ramsgate, travelling back and forth from England to France as a young child, often carrying over-ripe French cheeses, much to his fellow passengers' concern. He was swept up into National Service at 18 and served in the Korean War. At just 19 was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery, leading critical night expeditions, and enduring extreme cold and horrific close combat.

After the Korean War, Paddy went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, to read English Literature and Philosophy. He ultimately chose to go into teaching, to share his love of poetry and the spoken word with children – a profession he loved.

Paddy met Caroline his wife through a shared love of mountaineering. They married and moved to Switzerland, where they taught at private schools in the Swiss and French Alps, living in a small mountain chalet, complete with cows downstairs, until moving to Scotland in the late 1960s.

Simon and Sasha were born soon after in Edinburgh. The family moved to Worcester when Paddy became Her Majesty's Inspector for Schools and Colleges. He was a highly valued member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, often advising government ministers on schools and education policy, as well as becoming a key founder of the Equal Opportunities Commission and, later, a Chief Advisor and Team Leader for OFSTED.

Paddy and Caroline lived in Guilden Morden for many years, carefully restoring and rebuilding the Old Manse on the High Street, before moving to Ashwell when Paddy retired, continuing to spend several months a year in the French Alps, skiing until his late 70s.

Paddy loved to help others, and would do this quietly, under the radar and without fuss, supporting old friends in Ashwell who had no family.

In his later years, Paddy was cared for tirelessly by Caroline. His wonderful sense of humour and Irish wit never left him. He was always there with the witty retort, a silly pun, a wry play on words, making jokes, having fun right until the end... always a twinkle in his blue eyes, always gently laughing at himself and others.

He would encourage everyone to live fearlessly, to be stoic, to laugh in the face of adversity and to push on through the hard times, to pursue adventure, to travel and to experience all life has to offer.

Rest well in all our love, dearest Paddy.

Margaret Reed (1935 - 2020)



Margaret was born on 30th May 1935 to Albert and Mabel Hall at 77 Foresters Cottages, Back Street, Ashwell. She was the youngest of their four daughters, sister to Ruby, Gladys and Doreen.

Margaret attended the Merchant Taylors School followed by Baldock Secondary School. She made lifelong friends with Audrey (now Gurney) and Brenda (now Fitzgerald): an inseparable group of three.

One of Margaret's early jobs was at Madison's greenhouses near Royston. She also worked at Kosmos Photographic in Letchworth until she married. Later on, she worked at the Bushel & Strike for many years.

Margaret first met her husband Derek at the recreation ground. He used to cycle with his friend around the Royston area where he lived and, after meeting Margaret, he would then regularly cycle over both day and night to see her. They married in Ashwell Parish Church on 13th November 1954 and their son Gary was born in 1955. Margaret loved being a mother.

Their first home was the 'Twitchell', which used to be opposite Plait Hall in the High Street. Another of their early homes was at Bell Balk cottages near Odsey, which meant a daily bike ride of nearly four miles into Ashwell along the Ruddy for Margaret to visit her family. In the early 60s they returned to the village to a bungalow at 92 Ashwell Street where Margaret remained for the rest of her life.

Margaret and Derek were married for 65 years. They enjoyed lots of happy times and supported each other through the difficult times of ill health. Margaret was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 but outwardly carried on with her daily life just as if nothing was wrong.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

When Gary married, Margaret took great pleasure in his wife's children, Rachel and Natalie, and was overjoyed at becoming a grandmother when Gary's daughter Amy was born. Margaret loved spending time with all the girls, and especially with Amy who enjoyed visiting the village and going with her Nanny up the Claybush Hill track to pick blackberries and playing in The Springs and at the recreation ground.

Margaret was well known by all for her thoughtfulness. She would always help others and would make people cakes, jam or knit clothes for friends, and generally help anyone. She was also of a great support to all her sisters' children when her sisters were seriously ill and at the end of their lives.

One of Margaret's neighbours said that she was 'Old Ashwell' - a lifelong resident who was well known, respected and cared for by everyone in the village. Margaret was such fun to spend time with and always had a story to tell. Even when things weren't going so well, she would be cheerful and keep smiling and laughing and that is how she will be remembered by everyone. She will be much missed by her whole family and all those who knew her.

Peter Sheldrick (1927-2020)



Peter grew up in Fowlmere, the younger son of William and Ethel Sheldrick, with an elder brother, Donald. After attending Melbourn Village College he did his apprenticeship at Marshalls of Cambridge and became a carpenter. His big break came when he did his National Service and was posted to Hamburg. He always took great delight telling us of his antics there.

On his return he met Winifred in Cambridge at the Midsummer Fair and offered to take her home on his motorbike! He pursued her for the next year or so and they married in 1951 in Little Abington Church. Michael, Dianne and Paul were born in the next few years. After working ten years on the family farm in Fowlmere they moved to Ashwell in the harsh winter of 1962/63, running a poultry farm along with pigs, rabbits, geese and ducks - it was a real Old Macdonald's Farm, selling fruit and eggs at the gate. One morning Peter was informed that their pigs had escaped and were casually walking down Ashwell High Street!

They immersed themselves in village life, joining the badminton club and afterwards always had a drink at the Bushel and Strike. The children joined the cubs, scouts and girls' life brigade. Eventually they grew up, married and produced seven grandchildren and then five great-grandchildren for Peter and Winnie to enjoy.

In the late 1960s Peter started one of the first landscaping businesses in the area and his work can still be seen around this area. Later in life he successfully started Ashwell Taxis, in particular the Taxi bus service to the station which continues to this day.

Football was one of Peter's lifelong passions, first as a player and later as a referee. Ashwell called on him as a referee when they needed one. Of course, Peter was even handed, which didn't always go down well with the home team! In later years he spent many hours in front of the television, supporting Arsenal (and others). He took his grandsons, Nick and Edward, to see Manchester United in Monaco.

His other passion was cars which, much to his family's amusement and Winnie's annoyance, he would change regularly.

Peter loved his garden, tending to his lawn and growing vegetables, which he took great pride in, even right up to last year.

Peter and Winnie enjoyed many visits to their daughter, Dianne, and her family in the south of France, enjoying the weather and trying their luck in the Monte Carlo casino. They enjoyed spending many New Year's Eves there, when they would dance the night away.

For their 60th wedding anniversary they went to Venice on the Orient Express. They also enjoyed many other holidays, including visiting relatives in the USA and several cruises.

Peter is sorely missed by all his family and friends.

Alex Thomas (1956 - 2020)



Alex was born on 14th January 1956 in Cefn Coed y Cymmer on the border of the Brecon Beacons National Park. He spent his childhood in the Brecon Beacons, outside on the mountains in the fresh air.

After attaining his A levels at the Vaynor and Penderyn Comprehensive School Alex went to Queen Mary College, University of London, to study Astrophysics. There he met his wife to be, Rosamund. He became a Physics teacher and taught at secondary schools in London, Letchworth and Hitchin.

Alex also studied with the Open University. He attained a first-class degree in Evolution and Geology while teaching in Hitchin. He was also an Open University tutor.

Alex loved camping and walking with his wife and had many holidays climbing mountains in the UK. One holiday, at the foggy top of Ben Macdhui, he found a person sheltering by a rock and stranded, with a paper map almost dissolved. Alex used his mountain skills to find the path and guide him safely to a warm place to recover with tea and cake.

Alex fought with mental health issues and after 2003 he could not win and stopped teaching. He made a limited recovery and discovered the joy of gardening, creating a successful vegetable garden at his home in Ashwell.

In 2012 he was diagnosed with mild COPD but this did not stop him growing vegetables. However, gradually he found that walking was getting more strenuous for him and he was slower going up the small hills in Ashwell.

He became very interested in the 1914-1918 war and made it a personal project to be involved over the four years of centenary remembrance from 2014. He researched and wrote an essay about unknown WW1 poets and read this out at a special service at Ashwell Parish Church. Alex also rekindled his love of fly fishing and spent many weekends at Grafham Water, bringing fresh trout home for tea.

Later in 2018 his health was in faster decline but he was always hopeful that the medical profession would be able to help him. In 2019 he was helped with piped oxygen and he still had a lovely caravan holiday, even with the oxygen machine and a motorised wheelchair.

Alex's health declined further and during a hospital stay he passed away on the 5th of October 2020.

Eileen Margaret Tunnard (1943 - 2020)



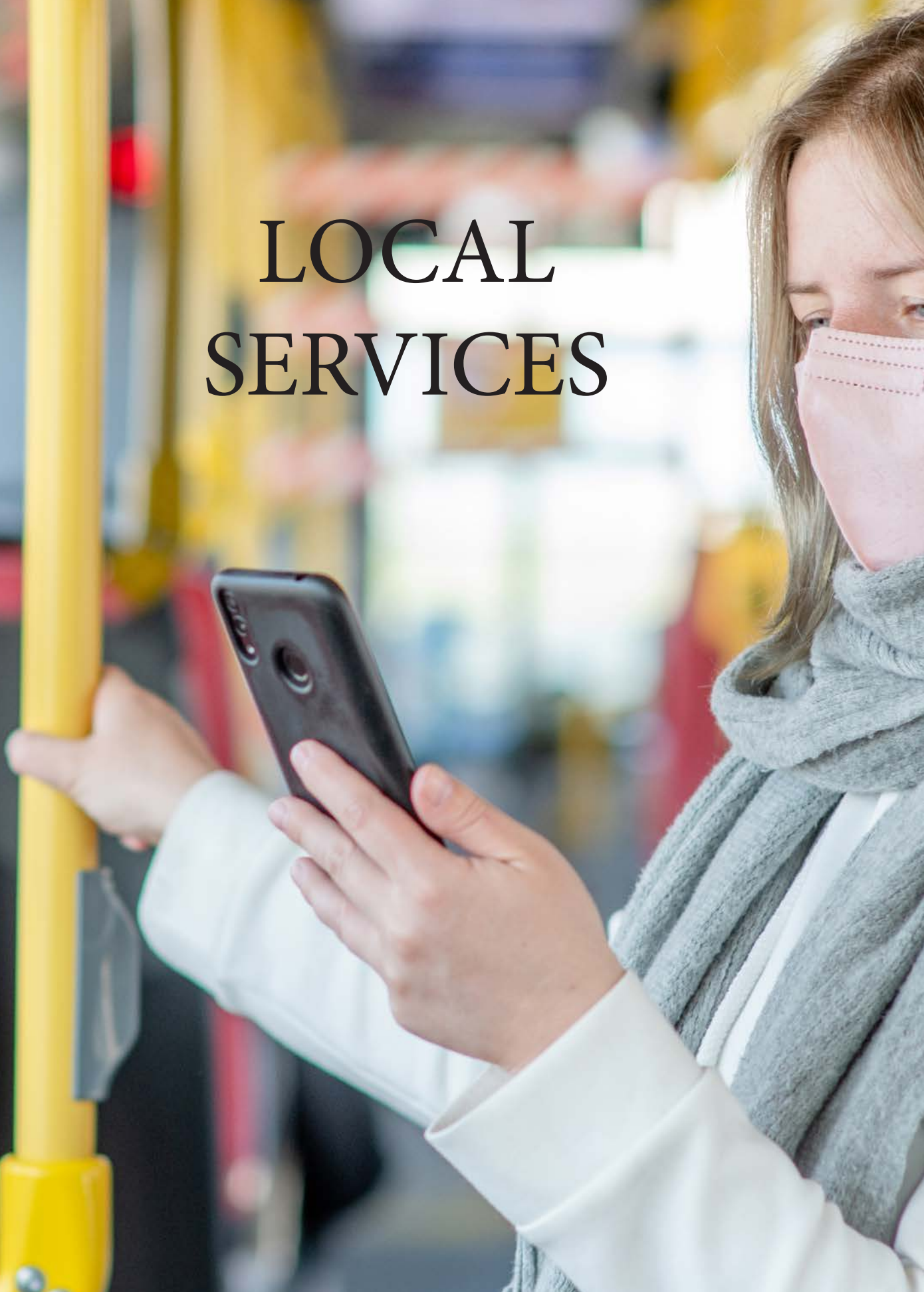
Eileen was born on 25th March 1943 in Mill Hill, NW London, the eldest daughter of Phyllis and Sydney Brooks. Eileen's father was a tool maker who worked on Mosquito bombers.

Eileen went to school in Mill Hill and continued to secretarial college where she learnt shorthand and typing, which equipped her to start work in London. She enjoyed sport and in 1961 joined a badminton club where she met Peter, whom she married in 1963. They lived in Elstree, Herts. where they remained for 26 years and had two children, Simon and Claire. During this time Eileen made many lifelong friends, was a founder member of Elstree Lawn Tennis Club, built a business up with a friend, hiring designer evening gowns, and ran a Brownie pack until 1989 when she moved to Biggleswade.

The move to a farm in Biggleswade was a complete change in lifestyle but Eileen wanted to become part of farm life and after going to agricultural evening classes she started a flock of pedigree Suffolk sheep. Of course, it didn't stop there, because the wool was very good for spinning and so she bought a spinning wheel and used the spun yarn for knitting. Eileen and Peter attended Dunton Parish Church where Eileen became secretary of the Friends who raised money for the upkeep of the building. In 2017, Eileen and Peter moved to Ashwell where they worshipped at St Mary's. They hoped to live here for many years and Eileen made many new friends in the short time she was in Ashwell.

After a short illness Eileen died on 1st January 2020 and is survived by her sister Pauline, husband Peter, children and grandchildren.

LOCAL SERVICES



North Hertfordshire District Council

General information and enquiries

www.north-herts.gov.uk or ☎ 474000 (9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday) Textphone: 474800 Deaf or hard of hearing: use the Relay UK app, dial 18001 followed by 01462 474000.

The Customer Service Centre

is located at the NHDC Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, SG6 3JF. It is open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Payments service

☎ 0300 456 0535 (24-hour service) Out of Hours in an Emergency (homelessness, environmental health, street cleaning, parks, public buildings, car parks) ☎ 0300 777 4125

Planning

The responsibility for planning matters is held by the District Council. The planning officer responsible for Ashwell at North Hertfordshire District Council can be reached on ☎ 474000 or ✉ planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk. If parishioners write to the District Council with comments, either in favour of or against a planning application, Ashwell Parish Council asks them to send copies, please, to the Parish Council Clerk (✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk) so that these comments can be taken into consideration by parish councillors when they meet.

Street Cleaning

This is the responsibility of the District Council. A sweeping lorry visits and public litter bins are emptied every four weeks. Additional visits are made to clear fallen leaves in the autumn, with manual sweepers where needed. If you feel that additional visits are needed, or that any work is not being done properly then please report it online at www.north-herts.gov.uk or by 'phone to ☎ 474000 (office hours) or ☎ 0300 777 4125 (out of hours).

Refuse Collection

At the time of writing the normal refuse collection day for Ashwell is Monday, except in Bank Holiday weeks. Bins should be left at the front of your property by 7:00 am on collection days.

- Food waste (small brown caddy) is collected weekly.
- Recyclable material - glass, tin cans, cardboard, brown paper and plastic other than rigid plastic or plastic bags (large, grey bin) and paper (blue/black box) - is collected fortnightly.
- Household rubbish which cannot be recycled (purple bin) is collected on the alternate fortnights.
- Garden waste (large brown bin) is no longer collected free of charge. To register and pay for this service, £40 per year at the time of writing, go to: gardenrecyclingscheme.co.uk/north-herts/
- Garden waste is collected on the same day as recyclable waste.

To report a missed bin collection: ☎ 474000 or ✉ northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk or go to www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/waste-and-recycling Household Waste Recycling Centres Our nearest recycling centres are at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, SG6 1HB and Beverley Close (off York Road), Royston, SG8 5HF.

For Hertfordshire County Council services please see separate entry. For Police and other local services please see separate boxes.

Hertfordshire County Council

General Enquiries

☎ 0300 123 4040 or www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Children's Services

The County Council has oversight of educational provision in Hertfordshire. For enquiries about Schools or Child Protection: ☎ 0300 123 4043 For enquiries about Free School Meals: ☎ 0300 123 404

✉ FreeSchoolMeals@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Fire and Rescue Service

Contact: ☎ 999 in an emergency. For non-emergencies ☎ 666900 for Baldock & Letchworth Fire Station, Weston Way, Baldock or ☎ 01438 202554, for the District Office at Stevenage. Fire safety enquiries ☎ 0300 123 4046

Highways

Maintenance of roads, pavements and street lighting is the responsibility of Hertfordshire Highways. Faults, including any problems with grass cutting in the summer, should be reported to them online. Go to: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on the 'Potholes and faulty street lights' or ☎ 0300 123 4047

Bus Passes

Enquiries: ✉ csc.concessionarytravel@hertfordshire.gov.uk To apply for or renew a bus pass ☎ 0300 123 4050 or: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services/Bus passes'.

Disabilities

To register as disabled or apply for a blue badge ☎ 0300 123 4042 Textphone/ Minicom 01992 555506 or go to: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services/ Disability'.

Social Care Help

To apply for a social care assessment, go to www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services', and then on 'Ask for Social Care Help'.

Emergency out of hours contacts

Children's social care emergency, 24-hour service ☎ 0300 123 4043 Adults' social care emergency, out of hours service ☎ 0300 123 4042 Textphone/Minicom: ☎ 01992 555506

For Police, please see separate box.



Community Housing

Settle (formerly North Hertfordshire Homes) is responsible for Wolverley House, some cottages in Back Street, and some of the houses and flats in Dixies Close, Ashwell Street and Station Road.

Wolverley House in Gardiners Lane provides sheltered and retirement housing. Facilities include 32 flats, lounge, dining room, guest facilities, laundry and garden. There are regular social activities for residents.

Contact: Settle
658 Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1HA
☎ 0330 343 0016
✉ customer.service@settlegroup.org.uk
📍 www.settlegroup.or.uk

For Ashwell Housing Association, please see page XX.
For Moss Cottage Homes, please see page XX.

Royston and District Community Transport

We offer door-to-door transport for people living in Royston and the surrounding villages of N. and E. Hertfordshire and S. Cambridgeshire who are unable to use conventional public transport or do not have the use of a car.

We can help with any kind of trip, including medical, social or shopping. Our current charge is 55p per mile and there is a minimum charge of £5.50 for journeys of ten miles or shorter.

Volunteer drivers provide the transport, using their own cars. We also have wheelchair accessible MPVs and mini-buses.

New volunteer drivers are needed urgently.
📍 www.roytrans.co.uk
☎ 01763 245228

Public Transport from Ashwell

Hertfordshire travel information is available from Intalink at: www.intalink.org.uk or by telephone: ☎ 0300 123 4050, or by post: Intalink, Passenger Transport Unit, HCC, County Hall CHN101, Hertford, SG13 8TJ

Travel information can also be found on the Traveline website: www.traveline.info or by telephone: ☎ 0871 200 22 33. Bus timetables are displayed opposite the village stores on the wall outside Bear House, and at the bus stop opposite the Three Tuns.

Post Office

At the time of writing the Post Office is open in the Parish Room at the following times:

Monday afternoons	13:00 – 16:30
Wednesday afternoons	12:30 – 15:00
Friday mornings	09:30 – 12:00

It provides most of the Post Office services, including banking.

Meals on Wheels...and more

The County's Meals on Wheels service is provided by Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) on behalf of the County Council. It operates across the County, 365 days of the year. Meals are delivered hot and ready to eat at the subsidised cost of £5.10 for a main meal and dessert (prices may increase on 1st April 2021), delivered between 11:30 am and 2:00 pm. Each visit includes the cost of delivery and a welfare check.

You can choose from a wide range of meals, including Kosher, Asian, Halal, and West Indian food. HILS also provides texture-modified meals for people who may have difficulty in swallowing. In addition to the hot meals, HILS provides Tea and Breakfast packs for £3.45 and £2.95 respectively – this service is only available to people receiving hot meals.

Please be aware that our prices are liable to change. For the latest information on any of our services you can give us a call on the number below, or visit our website.

HILS also provides a wide range of additional support services to help older and vulnerable people stay happy, healthy, and independent at home. These include:

- A Nutrition and Wellbeing service, offering free nutrition and dietetic support for meals clients
- Medication prompts – for meals and pop-in clients
- Active Ageing – one-to-one exercise support in your home
- Home from Hospital packs with three days' worth of groceries, delivered to your home or hospital
- In-home eye testing, delivered by A1 opticians
- Dementia fun clubs and support
- A keysafe installation service to help you stay safe at home
- Food for lunch clubs and groups delivered hot and ready to eat
- Advocacy to help people make decisions about their care and support

All HILS services are delivered in a safe Covid-Secure way, which includes the use of personal protective equipment, such as face masks and gloves, and contact-free delivery where appropriate. For more information about HILS services, or to sign up for our two-day free trial, please contact:

Hertfordshire Independent Living Service
☎ 0330 2000 103
✉ info@hertsindependentliving.org
📍 www.hertsindependentliving.org

Police

The Police Officer who covers the Ashwell area is:
PC Mark Ellwood, ✉ mark.ellwood@herts.pnn.police.uk

In an emergency, when there is a danger to life or a crime is actually taking place, ☎ 999.

The Royston Rural Safer Neighbourhood Team is based at Royston Police Station. The officer in charge of this team is:
Sergeant Jon Vine, ✉ jonathan.vine@herts.pnn.police.uk

The local Police Community Support Officers for Ashwell are:
PCSO Chris Brabrook, ✉ chris.brabrook@herts.pnn.police.uk
and PCSO Penny Tomsett, ✉ Penelope.tomsett@herts.pnn.police.uk

To speak to either A/Sergeant Lee Jessup or PCSOs Brabrook or Tomsett, please ☎ 101 and ask for them in person.

For non-emergencies where police attendance is required, to report a crime or to report any other incidents, ☎ 101. Please do not use social media as a venue for communication in any of these circumstances.

Category		Landline	Mobile
Accountants	Berry Accounting Services, Litlington, page 75	01763 852622	07850 426325
	LIRIC, Steeple Morden, page 49	01763 853633	
	The Wright Accounts Services, page 90	743159	07872 880107
Agricultural and Commercial Buildings	Johnstruct Ltd, page 29	01277 890595	07967 010575
Alarms and CCTV systems	Opsica Security, page 19	03330 124578	
Bakers	Days of Ashwell, High Street	742112	
Basket Maker	Sandra Barker, Gardiners Lane	743009	
Beauty Treatments	Ashwell Beauty at Rhubarb and Mustard	743462	
	Beauty Barn		07990 311794
Boarding Kennels and Cattery	Country Boarding for Cats and Dogs, Slip End	742658	
Builders	Mick Huggins, Ashwell Street, page 75	742454	07762 965323
	S D Brown Building Contractors, page 111	659884	07760 241922
Butchers	Crumps, Mill Street, page 53	742255	
Car Repairs, Fuel and Sales	Ashwell Garage, Station Road, page 53	742310	
	Mantles, inside front cover	01763 722780	
Caravan Sites	Ashridge Farm Caravan Club	742527	
	Loves Lane Camping & Caravanning	742382	
Care Services	Care Choices	01223 207770	
	Carewell of Ashwell	743434	07545 273483
Child Care/Activities	Ashwell Playgroup, page 50		07565 528194
	Baby and Toddler Group, page 51		
	Bury Lane Fun Barn, Melbourn, page 59	01763 260418	
	Gloria's Day Nursery, West End	742219	
	Messy Play, page 51		
Chimney Sweep	Mills & Sons Chimneys	417006	07736 172988
Churches	C of E, (Vacant)	742277	
	Quakers, Mr Ian Chandler	743091	
	RC, Father Denis Sarsfield	893127	
	URC, Mrs Chris James	742684	
Citizens Advice Bureau	Royston Office	03444 111444	
Cleaning	Cooker Buddy, oven cleaning, page 75	810065	
Coffee Shop, Deli and Gifts	Rhubarb & Mustard, High Street	743462	
Community Transport	Royston & District Community Transport, page 49	01763 245228	
Computers	Sigma Office, page 59	742783	
Councillors	County: Steve Jarvis, Hertfordshire County Council, page 17	01438 727122	
	District: Tom Tyson, North Hertfordshire District Council, page 18		07546 589377
Dentist	Ashwell Dental Surgery, High Street	742353	

LOCAL SERVICES

Category		Landline	Mobile
Doctors	Ashwell Surgery, Gardiners Lane	417377	
Dog Training	Completely Canines, Station Road		07969 428293
Education	Ashwell Primary School, page 45	742297	
	Knights Templar School, Baldock	620700	
Electrician	Collings Electrical, page 63	08001 804042	
	S D Brown Building Contractors, page 111	659884	07760 241922
	Gill George, page 28		07990 977124
Estate Agent	Country Properties, Ashwell Office, back cover	742077	
Farm Shop	Bury Lane, Melbourn, page 59	01763 260418	
	Sarah's Farm Shop	01763 852376	
Flowers	Ashwell Flowers		07720 429706
Funeral Directors	E H Crouch Funeral Directors, Letchworth (Dignity), page 75	01462 893191	
	Neville Funeral Service, Hitchin, page 16	444910	
Garden Centre	Arrington Garden Centre and Café, page 25	01223 208194	
	Bickerdikes, Letchworth, page 43	673333	
Garden Design and Maintenance	Jane Buxton Garden Consultant, page 115	742173	
	Meridian Lawncare, page 65	01763 242909	
Garden Furniture	Martin Sheds, Hinxworth, page 115		07921 163162
General Stores	Ashwell Stores, High Street	742220	
Hairdressers	Bradley's, Dixies Barns, page 63	742043	
	Susan Birch, High Street	742298	
Hall Hire	Ashwell Parish Room, office@stmarysashwell.org.uk	743922	
	Ashwell School	742297	
	Ashwell Village Hall	742913	
	United Reformed Church	742757	
Health and Well-being	Amber Health, page 67	490141	
	FeetcarePlus, page 49	790065	
	Foot Health, Kate E Cumins "anamazing feet", page 51	631720	
	Hares Clinic, page 19	08453 038372	
	Vanessa Jenkinson Reflexology, page 105	742592	
Hertfordshire County Council	See pages 17, 125	03001 234040	
Holiday Lets	Character Holiday Cottage, Nicki Holmes		07957 285286
	Daisy Cottage, Northrepps Village	01438 813665	07803 906291
Hospice	Garden House Hospice	679540	
Housing	Ashwell Housing Association, page 23	742722	
	Moss Cottage Homes, page 22	742385	
	Settle (North Hertfordshire Homes)	03303 430016	

Category		Landline	Mobile
	Wolverley House Warden, Community Housing	742123	
Jewellers	Keith Gordon, Ashwell Jewellery, page 29	743915	07764 475391
Local and Family Historian	David Short	742385	
Locksmith	mr LockDoc 24/7 Locksmith Services	338202	07772 111222
Meals on Wheels		03302 000103	
Museum	Curator, Peter Greener, page 26	742956	
Nature Reserve	Ashwell Quarry, page 65	742684	
North Hertfordshire District Council	See pages 18, 125	474000	
	Emergency out of hours	03007 774125	
Opticians	Oliver Radley, page 95	01763 273300	
Painter/Decorator	Paul Norman, page 103	730125	07515 157767
Parish Council	Chairman, Graham Lee, page 4		07751 343096
	Clerk, Jane Porter, clerk@ashwell.gov.uk, page 4	743706	
Pest Control	Bugs 'n' Things Pest Control Limited, page 53	735999	
Pharmacy	Ashwell Pharmacy, page 25	742250	
Picture Framing	Ashwell Gallery	743366	
Pilates	Ashwell Pilates	743244	
Police	See page 126, also:		
	Royston	01763 249249	
Political Parties	Conservative, Christine Scholfield	742136	
	Labour, Rod Leete	742516	
	Liberal Democrat, Anne Reddaway	742583	
Post Office	See page 126		
Property Maintenance	ECMS - Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Service, page 28	742566	07713 095709
Public Houses/Hotels	The Bushel & Strike	743984	
	The Three Tuns	743131	
Samaritans	North Hertfordshire, pages 7, 29	455333	
Transport Services	R&A Transport Services, page 49	743106	07951 851501
Tree Surgeons	Hudson Timber		07802 885715
	The Blue Tree Co	450203	
Tutoring Services	Kip McGrath Education Centres, page 43	672227	
Water Softeners	Ashwell Water Softeners	742472	08006 343470

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