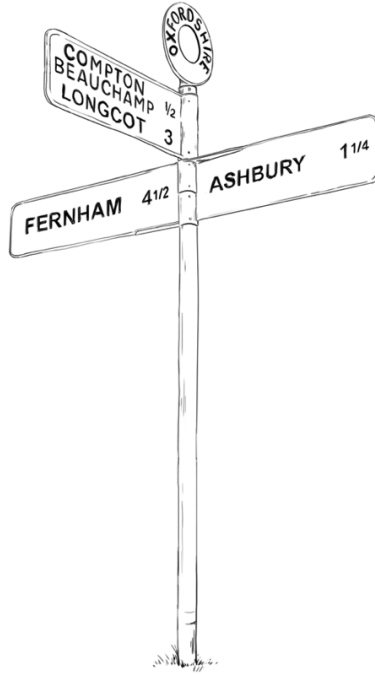


ASHBURY COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM NEWS

JULY 2020



**Thought for the month
Reopening of churches
Ashbury and Longcot news**

I think everyone knows the drill by now, but just in case anyone needs a reminder, I have printed a few individual copies which will be left in the Ashbury bus shelter (in a cardboard box) for anyone "offline" to collect.

Thought for the month

Parish records and registers have long been a useful source of historical reference for village life. Five years ago, some of the registers held in St Mary The Virgin Longcot, including one that went back to 1907, were beginning to show signs of deterioration so I deposited them at the local public records office for safe keeping.

Thus it was, with a sense of history, that I recently opened up the current attendance register of St Mary and wondered how to reflect for posterity the gap in public worship from 23rd March 2020 until July 2020. It is possible that I could draw upon the example of the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon who, in 1564 scribbled a note in the parish record which said “hic incipit pestis” (roughly ‘here begins the plague’). It was the same register that the vicar recorded the baptism of one “Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere” a few months earlier. Fortunately for the English language, the life of the infant William Shakespeare was spared during that pandemic.

And it is in the optimistic spirit of that last note of good news that I reflected upon the current pandemic and the response of villagers within our local area to a national ‘lockdown’ with unknowable consequences. In short, I have been immensely heartened. The setting up of a food bank in Shrivenham, church services held virtually, the organisation of street coordinators across all our villages to help support the elderly and the vulnerable, the ability of Longcot and Fernham School to use Zoom to hold an Easter service with some 83 participants (an event no doubt as chaotic as it was good fun) – all these helped keep our communities together and kindle the ‘can do’ spirit epitomised by the late Dame Vera Lynn.

As the lifting of the ‘lockdown’ restrictions continues apace, there will inevitably be further challenges but I believe that the common sense and positive outlook of our villagers will prevail. And whilst optimism on its own will not win the day, it will certainly enable us to use the new technology that we have discovered during the pandemic, find innovative ways to overcome practical difficulties, and generate the sense of community that our churches and our villages need to survive in the future.

So rather than write in the church register that there was a sixteen week gap in the services at St Mary, perhaps I should just record that there were 25 services held on-line, with sermons delivered by a wide range of lay people and priests. Our worship has not just been confined to one building but shared amongst many.

Dennis Blease, Church Warden, St Mary the Virgin, Longcot

Views expressed in "Thought for the month" are those of the contributors

Ashbury News

Dogs in St Mary's Churchyard

Several members of our community have requested that we do not allow dogs in St Mary's churchyard as they have been very upset to find **dog mess on the graves** as well as having dogs loose in the churchyard while visiting graves. St Mary's PCC have agreed that we will not allow dogs, except assistance dogs, and have put up a sign to this effect. There are railings by the entry gate which we ask you to tie your dog to if you are visiting a grave and walking your dog at the same time.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this: **710801 Maggie Simons Church Warden**

Longcot

Longcot Churchyard Wildlife Garden

We know how important the churchyard is to so many people in Longcot and never more so than in these last three months. Spend an hour there and you are likely to see dog walkers, cyclists or ramblers taking a break on a bench and families out with children on daily exercise. The number of people who pass through and enjoy the garden makes the gardeners' work so worthwhile.

This period has been difficult for the team as for everyone, and we miss our monthly get togethers, but individuals have spent time cutting back and keeping the garden looking cared for as best we can. The grass cutters have been brilliant, particularly as they have had to repair and source spare parts for the mower as well as cutting the grass. It all looks good in a lovely wild way and if you have time to linger, why not see how many butterflies and different wildflowers you can identify as you walk through. Particularly good at the moment is rattle, ladies' bedstraw, blue cranesbill, campion and of course hog weed, which we try and control. It's a very good year for butterflies. Look for the Meadow Browns on the stinging nettles. .

Happy wildlife spotting!

Shirley & Jan

Church Matters

Re-opening the churches

It is funny how change creeps up on you. We've been trying to put together a plan for re-opening the churches and it seemed more difficult than it ought to be. Then I realized: over the past 12 weeks, the benefice has grown from seven churches into a group of eight, because we now have an online congregation too. This is a joy, but it's also a challenge. We need to keep what was best about services – all the things we've missed during lockdown – but also to incorporate what we've gained. So we will move forward slowly, trying to keep things simple. And we probably won't get it right first time, so please bear with us.

From 5 July there will be three services each Sunday: 9am morning prayer in one of the benefice churches (starting with Watchfield), 10am Holy Communion in another (starting with Ashbury) and what is now our normal 11am online service. As Shrivenham and Fernham are currently not open for public worship (Shrivenham due to building work; Fernham in order to help the nursery remain clear of infection), it will take five weeks to have a service of each type in every church, so keep an eye on the website or facebook to know what is happening where. Or just ask me, Lucy or your churchwarden. Contact details in the box below.

Our priority is to keep you safe in church so we will put in place all the hygiene and social distancing measures you would expect. This does limit capacity so, again, please bear with us. Also the churches will be closed for 72 hours between services to minimize the chance of infection. The churches in Ashbury, Longcot and Watchfield will normally be open for private prayer on a Wednesday; Compton Beauchamp is open on a Sunday. Please check for local opening times.

The churchwardens and I will review the rotas at the end of July when we've had a chance to see how things are working and what changes (if any) have been made to church and government guidance. Please let me know what you think, too. My email is vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk.

No organisation is going straight back to the way things were pre-lockdown, and the church is no exception, but what has not changed is our commitment to you and to providing public worship and pastoral care to the best of our ability. However you choose to join us, we look forward to seeing you.



St Mary's Longcot

Contact details

Vicar

Norma Fergusson
or 01793 784338

vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Benefice Administrator

Lucy Laird

shrivenham.ashbury.benefice@outlook.com

Churchwardens

Dennis Blease, Longcot

d2blease@btinternet.com

Joanna Lambert, Compton Beauchamp

jrjlambert@aol.com

Maggie Simons, Ashbury

MaggieMSimons@outlook.com

Village services in July – dates and times correct at time of publication

5 July 10am Holy Communion, St Mary's Ashbury

12 July 9am Morning Prayer, St Mary's Longcot

10am Holy Communion (BCP), St Swithun's

26 July 9am Morning Prayer, St Mary's Ashbury

10am Holy Communion, St Mary's Longcot

Ashbury Prayer cycle for July: 5 Walnut Trees Hill, 12 Wixes Piece, 19 Ashbury Hill, 26 Berrycroft.

Churches open for private prayer

The village churches are normally open as shown below

St Swithun's, Compton Beauchamp Sundays, 9-10am

St Mary's, Longcot Wednesdays, 5-6pm

(NB St Mary's Ashbury closed for heating work from 6th.)

Schools

As you probably know, our schools have been open throughout the pandemic caring for the children of key workers. Now more children are coming back in order to have some experience of school life again before the summer holidays. This is particularly important for the year sixes who will be leaving to go to new schools in September. Our thoughts and prayers are with all students and staff and we wish them a happy and relaxing time.

Rev'd Nina Summerfield

We are sorry to announce that, due to circumstances beyond her control, the Rev'd Nina Summerfield will not now be able to join us as Associate Vicar. She sends her thanks and prayers to everyone who has made her so welcome on her visits to Ashbury. Please keep Nina and her family in your prayers as they seek to discern their way forward.

LONGCOT CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER – CHAPEL NEWS

Sadly, the Chapel must remain closed for the time being but as soon as we have the green light we shall be back to normal and the monthly ecumenical services and T Time Fellowship meetings will start again. Until then everyone associated with the chapel prays that all our friends in Longcot and the surrounding villages stays safe and healthy. Love and God bless from the Stewards.

Ambassadors Bible Church (at AEFC) While the current situation is so fluid please look at our website www.ambiblechurch.co.uk

Country Matters

Brexiters put Boris into Parliament for diverse reasons. For me it was to regain our sovereignty and rightly or wrongly I was uncomfortable with the protectionism of federal Europe, even though in the short term I recognised it would be painful to farmers. Tariffs to manipulate market advantage have been around a long time. Richard Cobden (1804-65) son of a Sussex farmer campaigned for free trade to help the poor. He was against tariffs restricting grain imports from the US which ultimately led Peel to repeal them in the Corn Laws Act of 1846.

All this is rather relevant again today as we seek new trading relationships round the world, especially as under a free trade regime our markets could be flooded with imports produced abroad at lower costs leading to lower prices. This would in part be balanced[by] industries' ability to buy some commodities from abroad at lower cost.

Recently an Agricultural Bill passed through the Commons and onto the Lords for scrutiny. Neil Parish's amendment to protect our farmers from imports of a lower

standard failed. The Bill centred on improving environmental biodiversity, flagged up as “public goods” and was light on measures of food production and security. Many found this surprising in the light of Covid 19 and concerns over our future food supply.

At the moment the detail on incentives for what will constitute public goods is noticeably vague but with the national debt exploding only an extreme optimist would not fear tougher times ahead.

Many were disappointed that the Bill passed without the protection the amendment would have given even though before the vote senior members in the Commons spoke encouragingly of supporting the amendment. Thus a big dilemma. I and others will be hypocrites if we support leaving one tariff regime only to form another in the UK and successive governments worry about raising prices and its effect on the cost of living.

Currently the debate has centred on both future trade with Europe after Brexit but also with US. The US wants a tariff free trade deal here, exporting its chicken and beef. That’s chlorinated chicken and beef enhanced with hormone additives in the feed. Hormones are banned here and in Europe because they may be unsafe for some including pregnant women.

Our water and swimming pools contain chlorine but US chickens are produced with lower hygiene, food safety, animal welfare and environmental standards and the chlorine supplies that protection at the point of sale. However recent evidence shows that protection deteriorates over time.

The US also fails on antibiotic reduction (currently x 5 here) also on climate change and pollution. Free markets only work on a like for like basis. An imposed tariff could be justified on products where our standards are not met. But we also need even better labelling for the public to know the provenance of what they buy and marketing campaigns extolling our brands of quality and local products. All this is crucial to the future of home production.

Richard Green

Contacts

Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman Cliff Davies 01793 710712 chairman@ashbury.org.uk

Clerk to the council: Laura Evans email clerk@ashbury.org.uk

Defibrillator: On the wall by the School entrance

St Mary's Ashbury Parochial Church Council

House-for-Duty – vacancy

Church warden: Maggie Simons 01793 710801

Secretary: Roger Simons 01793 710801 rogersimons1@outlook.com

Vicar (Shrivenham) Revd Norma Fergusson 01793 784338

rev.n.fergusson@btinternet.com (not Monday)

Ashbury Village Hall

Maggie Simons 0193 710801 maggiemsimons@outlook.com

Secretary Margaret Smith 01793 710800 mbsmith5@hotmail.co.uk

Bookings: Lin and Kevin Clarke 01793 710326

Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE(A) Primary School and little Berries Preschool

Headteacher Rachael Smith 01793 710259 [www. http://www.ashburyprimary.org.uk](http://www.ashburyprimary.org.uk)
office.3851@ashbury.oxon.sch.uk

Ashbury Village Shop 01793 710068

G.P. Surgeries Shrivenham 01793 782207 Lambourn 01488 71715/72299

Post Office at the Rose & Crown Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30-11.30am

Vale of the White Horse District Council 01235 422422

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

Recycling/Rubbish collection queries admin.vale@biffa.co.uk

Food waste is collected weekly, green/black bins alternate each week. Garden waste brown bins fortnightly. Mondays except Bank holidays.

Your Local District Councillors are: Elaine Ware 01973 783026

elaine.ware@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Simon Howell 01793 784491

simon.howell@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor: Yvonne Constance: 01235 751475/07976934884

yvonne.constance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Wantage constituency: David Johnston david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
0207 219 3000

Newsletter entries for August 2020. Submit your entries for August by 24th July to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionlturner@me.com 01793 710302 For more of "what's on" and local information see the Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.