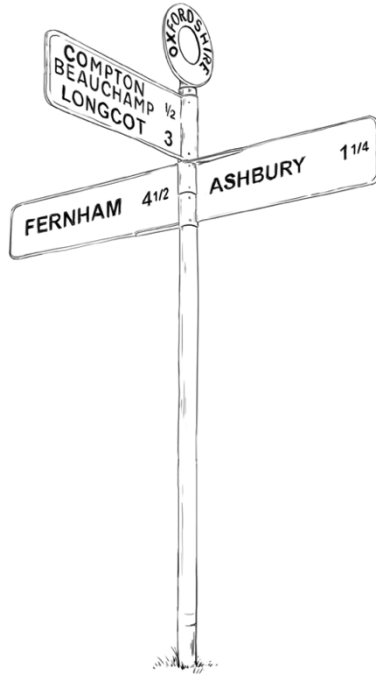


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
DECEMBER 2023/ JANUARY 2024**



Ashbury School Christmas Fair 7th December

Kick Start Christmas Saturday 9th

Community Club 21st

Stations of the Nativity 22nd

Burns Night supper 26th January

Norma's Thought for the month

I know I'm getting old when I find myself thinking that Christmas seems to start earlier than ever each year. And that's not just because of the merchandise in the shops (does anyone else wonder whether mince pies ever actually leave the shelves, or just hide behind the Easter eggs and Halloween candy?) but because the rhythm of church life means you have to start planning services in September, ideally with the notes from the last Christmas services – if you can find them! And then, of course something happens and all the plans so carefully made have to change and you find yourself, at the last minute, making it up as you go along.

It seems to me that the truth of Christmas lies in the tension between the planning and the panic. In the beginning (to coin a phrase!) God's plan was that we should know him face to face, and, despite our best efforts, it still is. With the birth of Jesus at the first Christmas we were given another way of seeing God. In vulnerability, in poverty, in weakness God's plan met our mess and muddle and showed us that we were not alone. That we were loved, understood and forgiven.

In his poem, *On the Edge*, Malcolm Guite puts it like this;

Christmas sets the centre on the edge;
The edge of town, the outhouse of the inn,
The fringe of empire, far from privilege
And power, on the edge and outer spin
Of turning worlds, a margin of small stars
That edge a galaxy itself light years
From some unguessed at cosmic origin.
Christmas sets the centre at the edge.

And from this day our world is re-aligned
A tiny seed unfolding in the womb
Becomes the source from which we all unfold
And flower into being.
We are healed,
The end begins, the tomb becomes a womb,
For now in him all things are re-aligned.

However your Christmas works out this year, may you know that God is there beside you. Always.

Blessings

Norma

Ashbury

Councillors Corner: Vacancy on the Parish Council; and the 20 mph Zone There are two issues to share from the Council meeting on 20 November. First, sadly, Huw Owen told us he was with regret obliged to resign his position on the Council because of increased work commitments. Laura Evans will be taking on Huw's responsibilities as our Responsible Finance Officer. Laura already holds this position on two other Councils so our finances will be in good hands.

This development means that there is a vacancy on the Council. Please apply! The District Council will be formally leading the initial search for a replacement but it may eventually fall to the remaining Councillors to co-opt a volunteer to fill our sixth seat. Do please consider coming forward to serve our community as a Councillor. If you are interested in learning more about what is involved, please contact me or any of the other Councillors (Daniel Crowley, Molly Westen, Eliza Lewis and James Greenham).

The other significant development to report is the approval in principle by OCC of our application for a 20mph zone in Ashbury, Idstone and Kingstone Winslow. This happened only shortly before our meeting and the details on the scope of the new zone and the timing of implementation have not yet been communicated to us by OCC. But the approval in principle is most welcome. We shall share all further information with you as it comes in.

In parallel, Daniel Crowley has made progress with setting up the Speed Watch Group, who will have an important role in monitoring compliance with the present speed restrictions and the 20 mph zone, when it comes into force. The Group's core membership are all now trained (an online course taking a maximum of 30 minutes); the zones of operation across the parish have been identified and agreed with the police; and the equipment is ordered and should be arriving soon. We do need to enlarge the group so that we can ensure full and sustained coverage. So, again, do please volunteer to join the Group and help to keep our roads safe.

Christopher Prentice

Ashbury Community Club: Thursday, 21st December Christmas Lunch at the Rose & Crown. There are a few places still available so if you'd like to join us please contact Sue Reade, tel. 710208, as soon as possible as we have to pre-order our menu choices. **Thursday 25th January** ,2.30pm in the Village Hall; Speaker T.B.C.

STATIONS OF THE NATIVITY – FRI 22ND DEC FROM 6PM

Ashbury once again turns into Bethlehem for this year's Stations of the Nativity Starting at Ashbury Crossroads - Join the shepherds and follow Mary & Joseph as they search for a place to stay for the night before the birth of baby Jesus. Carol singing and mince pies around the manger at the end of the evening.

Bucket collection proceeds to The Salvation Army

Be safe: wear warm clothes, sturdy shoes and carry a torch

Thanks to the Prentice family for allowing the use of their beautiful barn

Saturday 9th December - Kick Start Christmas

Two interactive concerts, hosted by The Rose and Crooners – raising money for The Watchfield and Shrevenham Community Larder and Christmas Care.

3.00 – 4.30 Ashbury School Hall Featuring the Ashbury School Choir - Tea, Coffee and cake available to buy in the interval

6.00 – 7.30 Ashbury Village Hall Featuring the Rose and Crooners – wine available to buy in the interval. Raffle and treats!

Tickets £2.00 available from the Rose and Crown

Bible Breakfasts

A small group of us meet at 8.00am for about an hour on a Saturday morning once a month to share a simple breakfast and look at parts of the bible. We have just started to look at Elisha. Our next meeting will be in January. If you think you might like to join us please do get in touch with me to find out more. Maggie Simons – contact details on the back page.

Burns Night Supper – Village Hall

A traditional Burns Night Supper and entertainment event will take place in the Village Hall on **Fri 26th January 2024** from 7.00 pm.

Enjoy a 'wee dram' to toast the haggis, a traditional Burns Night Haggis Supper, and be entertained by the Poems and Music of Robert Burns. Plus finish off the evening on a happy note with a Scottish sing song and a couple of Scottish dances.

Early booking is recommended, as places are limited

Booking closes on 12th January

Tickets £12.50 to include welcome drink, 'whisky toast' and supper – all proceeds will be shared between Ashbury Village Hall and St Mary's Church

If you'd like to reserve your tickets or would like to be part of the entertainment

contact: Email: Judy Clarke (email: judithannclarke@outlook.com)



CHRISTMAS IS COMING

FRIENDS OF ASHBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL
Enhancing education and building relationships



PLEASE JOIN US AT ASHBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CELEBRATE
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS FAIR

THURSDAY 7th DECEMBER 5PM - 7PM

FESTIVE FUN & GAMES GALORE - CHRISTMAS CRAFTS & FACEPAINTS -
THE CHRISTMAS RAFFLE - HOT & COLD FOOD, DRINKS, MULLED WINE &
HOT CHOCOLATE - FATHER CHRISTMAS IN HIS MAGICAL GROTTO & MORE!



ENTRY IS FREE!

ORDER YOUR HOT FOOD, SPENDING TOKENS AND RAFFLE TICKETS IN ADVANCE VIA CLASSLIST.
ALSO AVAILABLE BY CASH OR CARD ON THE DAY.
DRINKS AND FESTIVE TREATS BY CASH OR CARD AT THE EVENT.

The Christmas Fair is the school's major fundraiser and all of the money raised will go towards equipment and experiences for current and future pupils. Please contact ashburyschoolfriends@gmail.com for information or to find out how you can support our very special community school.

Ashbury Information by email Ad hoc emails are circulated to residents with up to date particulars about Ashbury events and other relevant information. If you would like your name added to the circulation list please email:
ashburyoxfordshire@hotmail.com

NEW RESIDENTS TO ASHBURY, IDSTONE & KINGSTONE WINSLOW A pack is available for new residents which contains useful information. If you have moved into the village recently and would like to receive a pack, or if you have a new neighbour, please contact Margaret Smith (710800) for Ashbury & Idstone or Anne Taylor (07491 035582) for Kingstone Winslow

CHURCH MATTERS:

**DECEMBER & JANUARY SERVICES IN ASHBURY, COMPTON, LONGCOT & FERNHAM
 WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:**

The service times are correct at the time of writing (10 November). For the latest news and information, please download the weekly Newsletter from our website.

The churches in Ashbury, Longcot and Compton Beauchamp are also open daily for private prayer.

Sunday 3 December	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	Ashbury
Sunday 10 December	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion + Baptism	Ashbury
	6.30pm	Carol service with Choir & Bells	Compton
Thursday 14 December	10.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Saturday 16 December	5.00pm	Carol service with Choir & Bells	Ashbury
Sunday 17 December	9.00am	Matins	Compton
	11.00am	Third Sunday service	Ashbury
	6.30pm	Carol service with Choir & Bells	Longcot

Thurs. 21 December	5.00pm	Carols on Elmside Green	Fernham
Friday 22 December	9.00am 6.00pm	Morning Prayer (BCP) Stations of Nativity	Ashbury Ashbury
Sunday 24 December	9.00am 4.00pm 11.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Crib Service Midnight Mass	Compton Ashbury Longcot
Monday 25 December	10.30am	Family Service + Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 31 December	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion*	Watchfield

2024

Sunday 7 January	9.00am 9.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Communion Morning Prayer	Compton Longcot Ashbury
Thursday 11 January	10.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 14 January	9.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion Holy Communion	Longcot Ashbury
Sunday 21 January	9.00am 9.30am 11.00am	Matins Morning Prayer Third Sunday service	Compton Longcot Ashbury
Friday 26 January	9.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Ashbury
Sunday 28 January	10.15am*	Benefice Holy Communion With Choir	Longcot

**Although everyone is welcome to attend any services, those marked with an asterisk are designed as services for the whole benefice.*

Covid Precautions at Services

Please do not come to Church if you think you may have Covid symptoms.

All online Morning Prayer, Communion services and sermons can be watched on the Shrivenham and Ashbury Facebook

If you are unable to join us in person, do join online through services and study groups on the Benefice Facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to access these events. Details of online services are on the weekly sheet and on Facebook.

Ashbury prayer cycle for December- 3rd Ashdown Estate, 10th High Street, 17th Idstone Road, 24th Idstone, 31st Kingstone Winslow

Ashbury prayer cycle for January- 7th Malthouse Close, 14th Odstone Farm & Cottages, 21st Pound Piece, 28th Station Road

Patrick's Licensing

A huge and heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make Patrick's licensing service on Monday 6 November so special. Readers; ringers; welcomers; presenters; clergy and singers (and what singing – Bruckner's *Locus Iste* and worship songs from Zimbabwe in the same service!). Also to the cleaners and flower arrangers who made the church so beautiful and the food fairies whose contributions managed miraculously to feed so many more people than we'd expected and Roger and his team for organising the parking. And Maggie and Lucy – who worked so hard behind the scenes. I could have said "participants in the service" too – but that was everyone. There were no observers among the congregation, everyone was fully involved and engaged.

And there were no strangers, only friends united by their support for Patrick. He and his family can be in no doubt about their welcome or their place within the life and worship of the benefice and the communities it serves, so thank you for that, too. A literal translation of *Locus Iste* is "this place was made by God" but you could also read it as "the Lord is in this place" and that was certainly true on that Monday evening.

Messy Church

If you haven't been to Messy Church yet, do give it a try. The next after-school session is on Thursday 30 November, then we take a break to 1 February. We start at 3:15pm in St Andrew's, Shrivenham, finishing at 5pm. For more information or to book a space contact standfast.shrivenham@yahoo.com. Messy Church is open to the whole Benefice. There is no charge to attend, but a minimum donation of £1.50 per child towards costs would be appreciated.

Cloths for the Cradle at St Andrew's on Wednesday 20th December at 5pm

A short, but quiet and reflective service for the week before Christmas. Christmas can be a bitter-sweet time as we remember those we love who are not around to share it with us, and worries about work, health or family can make it difficult to join in what seems to be compulsory jollity.

The wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, all of which link Christmas to Holy Week and Easter; this is an opportunity for us to bring our cares, uncertainties, hopes and fears to the God who knows what it is like to be human. If you would like prayer or pastoral support at this time, please contact Norma or Patrick. The contact details are under Pastoral Care, below.

STATIONS OF THE NATIVITY Friday 22nd December, 6.00pm at Ashbury Crossroads
Enter into the heart of the Christmas story, walking with Mary and Joseph as they try to find a place to stay before their baby is born in the Manor Barn and we celebrate with mince pies. There will also be a collection for those who are homeless this Christmas. Do wrap up warmly, bring a torch and take care in the proverbial dark streets.

PASTORAL CARE

If you have need for prayer or pastoral support, or wish to discuss a wedding or baptism, do not hesitate to contact Rev'd Norma Fergusson (vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk or 01793 784338) or Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu (associatevicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk or 07471 434276).

Caring for Creation at Christmas

Carefully planning all the food you intend to serve over Christmas and New Year is the best way to reduce both cost and waste. Without a shopping list it is easy to get tempted and buy more than needed resulting in wasted food which is bad for the environment. Reuse and reinvent your leftovers in different ways. If you have any unopened items, consider donating them to a food bank or perhaps to the Watchfield Community Larder rather than throwing them away.

And a reminder that, if you would like to send a card to friends in Ashbury, Kingstone Winslow and/or Idstone, there will be 'Christmas Card Trees' in St Mary's Church and in the Rose and Crown.

For other ways to **Waste Not this Christmas** check out tips by the Environment Agency [24 ways to waste not this Christmas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/24-ways-to-waste-not-this-christmas)

Support your local church or the Benefice as a whole with a text donation using the numbers below

For Ashbury

Text STMARYS 5 to 70085 to donate £5 or Text STMARYS 10 to 70085 to donate £10

For Longcot and Fernham

Text LONGCOT to 70085 to donate £4

For Compton Beauchamp

Text 5CB to 70450 to donate £5 or Text 10CB to 70460 to donate £5

For the Benefice as a whole

Text GIVEfive to 70470 to donate £5 or Text GIVETen to 70470 to donate £10

Your standard text message rate applies.

LONGCOT

T TIME FELLOWSHIP, St. MARY'S CHURCH

There will be no T Time Fellowship at the end of December due to the Christmas/New Year holiday BUT

26th JANUARY 2024 3-4.30 - We look forward to seeing everyone for our first meeting of the new year. If you haven't joined us before why not give us a try? You will be most welcome to enjoy some tea and cake, lots of chat and more than a few laughs. See you there?

A peaceful and blessed Christmas and a happy New Year to everyone from all the members of T Time Fellowship.

The Ambassadors Bible Church meet at what was the Ashbury Evangelical Free Church at 10:00 am each Sunday morning. All are welcome and there is also a Sunday School for the Children which meets at the same time.

Country Matters

Forgive me if I write about the weather! Farmers had a lovely spell in the first part of October to plant their winter corn crops in good order. Remember planting any earlier compromises blackgrass control. Then came the first winter deluge with 3 inches (75 ml) falling on the night of October 19/20th. The downland soils could take this but the heavy, vale, planted fields were overwhelmed just at that vulnerable time when germination, but not proper rooting had taken place. The next several weeks have seen more heavy downpours. I awoke on the morning of November 2nd and storm Ciaran to cries of seagulls and momentarily wondered whether the sea was upon us. A further 40ml fell with the road at Zulu Farm again in flood and lakes in our fields. The wheat in several fields at Zulu has been flooded out. This calls for resilience to face the losses of planting and also gross margins foregone if later in the spring it is decided to fallow these fields next year in the best interests of soil structure for future cropping. This is unusual devastation but what is happening in Gaza is on another scale. Heavy land right across the country has been affected with some areas recording the most rainfall in October since records began. There will be less wheat harvested next year. These days the Environmental Agency is keen to slow down drainage to rivers, which exacerbates flooding .

I have a friend who used to farm at Lyford near Wantage on heavy land. He used to call his heavy land The Badlands. His former farm is part of the site of the proposed large reservoir area that Thames Water have been pressing for a generation. Farm names are a giveaway. Starveall farms crop up. Our local one above Bishopstone strangely is now a fertile farm. I have another friend who has a Cold Harbour farm near Wallingford. This name also belies its present earliness and fertility. Locally we have a Sands farm and Sandhill farm, both descriptive of the soil. Once I got excited at buying a picturesque and cheap downland farm at Maiden Newton in Dorset. Though I knew it to be stony and poor, I was arrogant to think I might improve the yields with sewage sludge. My solicitor discovered some tenuous tenancy claim that ruled out a purchase and he also alerted me concerning local titles nearby such as Heartbreak Hill and Grimstone farm. Our local farms, Church, Ashbury, Odstone, Stone, Idstone, Lower Idstone, Rectory, Prebendal, Cues and Eastbrook are straightforward. Attractive names for farms that are confidence building are Mount Pleasant and Sunnyside. Probably the best of all is Prosperous farm, at Shalbourne near Hungerford where Jethro Tull invented the first corn drill in 1720-33 and there is a Paradise farm at Huntsbourne Tarrant near Andover and another in Leicestershire as a farm park.

Richard Green

Contacts

Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman: Christopher Prentice 01793 710821 chair@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

Associate vicar: Revd Patrick Mabhunu associate.vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

07471 434276

Church wardens: Maggie Simons 01793 710801 Richard Green 01793 791310

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: Katherine Foxhall 07916 285305

katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Viral Patel viral.patel@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 February 2024. Submit your entries for **February** by **22nd Janary**

to: M. Turner Clarendon, 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.