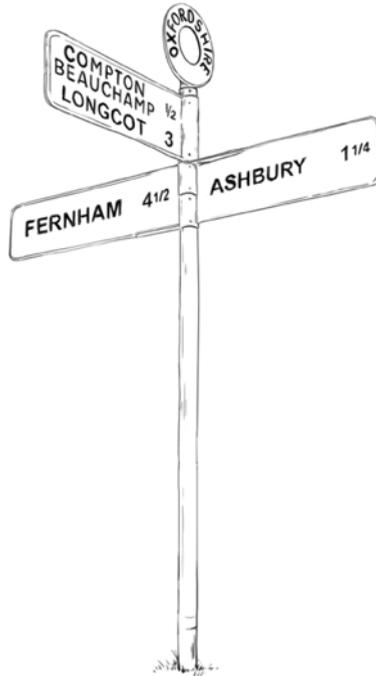


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
APRIL 2026**



**Councillors Corner
Community Club 23rd**

**Advance notice for:
Longcot spring concert MAY 2nd
Beat the Bounds MAY 3rd
Prospect Plant and Cake sale 9th MAY**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Have you ever talked to someone on the telephone or listened to a voice on the radio, then met or seen that person and thought that the face and the voice don't fit because they don't match what you had expected?

An oft quoted poem (or at least the first few lines) is *Leisure* by WH Davies, which begins "What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?" Somehow, I had in my mind that WH Davies himself was a gentleman of leisure, perhaps writing that poem as he gazed out on his country estate. So, I was surprised to learn that WH Davies (1871 – 1940) is described in Wikipedia as spending much of his life "as a tramp or hobo in the UK and USA". He had a troubled early life in South Wales and was arrested age 12 for "stealing handbags" and given 12 strokes of the birch as a punishment. He went on to have a colourful and adventurous life and although he eventually earned a living as a writer and spent his final days peacefully in Gloucestershire, my impression of him as a comfortable country gentleman is certainly at odds with his actual life.

Making assumptions or mistaken identity perhaps? As we journey on through Lent and approach Easter, John's gospel brings us a well-known case of mistaken identity which is almost comical and certainly touching. The resurrected Jesus stands in front of a weeping Mary Magdalene and as she turned to face him, she initially mistook him for the gardener. The moment of revelation when she recognises him is truly joyful and Mary cannot wait to tell everyone.

Maybe we can find an opportunity this Easter to encounter Jesus for ourselves, perhaps in a meditative Good Friday service or as we come together to celebrate Easter Day. No room for mistaken identity there – He is Risen!

Isobel Weller



Ashbury

Beat the Bounds Walk 2026

This year the annual 'Beat the Bounds' walk will take place on **Sunday May 3rd, starting at 8.30am in front of the pub**. This tradition of confirming the parish boundary is hundreds of years old, probably starting in Anglo Saxon times with the first written account we have for Ashbury being 'Abbot Beere's Terrier and Perambulation' of 1517. Everyone is welcome on this walk, including children. You can come for as much of the walk as you like. The history of the walk and more information on the route can be found at <http://www.ashbury.org.uk/beat-the-bounds-walk/> or call Steve Treadwell on 710369. The history of the boundary fields and boundary markers will be given en route. It's a circular walk and we are normally back at the pub by 3pm. Come and explore the parish with lovely views of the downs and vale that you will only ever experience on foot. And be part of history!

Spring Concert

On Saturday 14th March, at the Rose & Crooners Spring Concert, we raised an incredible £1,198.05 for Prospect House!

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets and sang along; the choir who sang their hearts out, the choir leaders who patiently taught us the songs and made us sound so amazing, to Holly for conducting and leading the evening in her brilliantly bonkers and fun way, to the choir members who made and handed out yummy cakes and canapés, donated hamper goods and sold hamper tickets, to those who organised the hamper prizes, to the team of volunteers serving behind the 'Crooners Arms' bar, and to the fabulous Ellen who travelled from Newport to tinkle the ivories so beautifully for us!

What an incredibly special community we are . Thank you everyone!

Councillors Corner:April

With the start of the financial year just around the corner, I should report to you all on what your Parish Council did this last year with the portion of the Council Tax which goes to fund our activities on your behalf. This is called the 'precept' and each January we submit an application for the following financial year.

For the present year, aside from covering the routine costs such as the grass cutting (on the Village Green, the old Churchyard and other areas like the KW green), we drew on the precept for two new installations, the set of mobile goalposts now on the Village Green and a new Speed Indicator Device (SID) to encourage compliance with the new 20 mph limits.

There has been an enthusiastic welcome for the goalposts, which have been in regular use (despite the relentless rain). As the weather improves, we hope to organise some informal games or competitions. We would welcome suggestions as to how that could best be organised to suit those interested in taking part. If you have ideas, please contact me (christopher.prentice@ashburyparishcouncil.gov.uk). The Speed Indicator Device has been purchased and will be installed soon, initially on the Idstone Road by the bus stop.

For this coming year, at our meeting in January, we agreed to bid for a small above inflation increase in the precept for next year. We are mindful that we have to build up a strategic reserve to cover the future maintenance costs of the Village Green. For a few more years these will be covered by the funds originally provided by the Wixes Piece developers. When those run out, the costs will fall to the Parish.

We also decided to set up a new long-term budget line to hold funds on your behalf to support the activities and overheads of the Village Hall. The fabric and facilities of the Village Hall have, as you know, been modernised and restored over the last twenty years. The funding for this has hitherto been somewhat “hand-to-mouth”, depending on grant applications and some cautious drawing down of the Hall’s modest endowment. The Village Hall Committee has long been imaginative in their local fund-raising and that will continue. The extra support now planned, provided from all households in the Parish through the precept, should enable the Village Hall Committee to plan for the longer term, to cover not only future overheads and continued refurbishment, but also to plan a wider programme of activities. So your precept monies will be helping the Village Hall to become, even more than it is now, a vital hub for the parish.

Beside this, there remains room in the budget for next year to support other initiatives / purchases in the common interest. Please submit your ideas (email address above) and we’ll be glad to consider them.

Christopher Prentice

JUNE WILMERS 1925-2026

Elizabeth Boyd, Margaret Smith, Anne Taylor and I attended a celebration of June Wilmers’s life at the North Herts Crematorium on March 9th. She was a remarkable lady not only for living to 100, but for her clandestine wartime service with the SOE (Special Operations Executive) and for still working at 96 years, teaching English to foreign students.

Her family were of well- connected Irish and Canadian descent. An only child, aged 12 she won a scholarship to Sherborne School for girls. Aged just 17 in 1942, she left school with A levels in German, French and English, having won the singles tennis final at Sherborne and the junior championship for Somerset. But for the war she would have played at Wimbledon. Through contacts, she joined the S.O.E.

With her language skills she was sent to Algiers to help with translation and organising the maquis resistance in southern France. By 1944 a spell in Siena and Florence followed even being granted an audience with the Pope! There she was to meet many English officers supporting the Italian Partisans working at frustrating behind enemy lines the German's advance up the spine of Italy.

My father in law's hero was the much decorated Major Roy Farrer (DSO, and three MC's, the Croix de Guerre and the American Legion of Merit) under whom he served at the end of the war in Palestine. June met him and many other young officers there including John Wilmers, her future husband. They married in 1946. June was released from the army in 1945 and was sent to Edinburgh working for the YMCA visiting German prisoners of war billeted in several camps in the far north.

Demobbed, her husband became a Queen' Council and later a Judge. They had three children and acquired a country cottage at Kingston Winslow. John died young in 1984 and June then used her translation skills, firstly to good effect for Ealing Council and afterwards to help foreign students at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham with many of her pupils keeping in touch with her after they had moved on. June was a gifted poet with several of her poems published. Aged 86 and with declining eyesight June moved from Kingston Winslow to Cambridge but continued teaching at the Cambridge Academy of English at Girton until the covid restrictions brought this to a close aged 96. She liked to keep in touch with an astonishingly wide circle of friends and would ring me up on my birthday. Maintaining a life of service and independence always with a sharp mind to her final years, she managed to look after herself in her flat until aged 99.

Dickie Green

PLANT AND CAKE SALE FOR PROSPECT HOSPICE - Saturday 9 May 2 pm

We would be very grateful for donations of plants and cakes to raise much needed funds for our local hospice - the hall will be open from 11.00-12.30 to receive these. As well as plants and cakes we will be selling second-hand gardening equipment. We hope you will be able to come and support the Prospect Hospice and find a bargain or two!

Some of you may have seen Prospect Hospice featured on ITV West news recently. The hospice is being forced to turn away dying patients every week because it can't afford to keep all of its specialist beds open. Half of the inpatient unit is closed. Here's the link to the news item.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujMxUCxNMIM>

Margaret Smith and Sarah Loney

Spring concert with the Clarinet Collective – Music Around the World.

The Clarinet Collective will be giving their annual concert in **St. Mary's Church, Longcot on Saturday 2nd May at 6 pm**. The programme has as its theme the idea of global harmony through the unifying language of music, and will celebrate the richness and diversity of musical cultures from around the world, featuring music from many different countries including England, France, Germany, Austria, America, Israel and Russia. It will include works by a wide range of wonderful composers through the ages, from Bach and Mozart to Holst, Borodin, Dvorak, Bizet and Lennon and McCartney.

As always, admission is free with a retiring collection. Profits will be shared between St. Mary's Church, the Longcot Village Trust and the UNICEF Ukraine Appeal. Seats are un-

numbered, but in order to help with seating and catering arrangements we ask that places are reserved in advance by emailing victorialmedcalf@gmail.com. Doors open at 5.30 pm and drinks will be available at the bar before the concert and at the interval.

CHURCHYARD SPRING-CLEAN Saturday 21st March 2026

Thanks to the time and work given by 34 people from across the Ashbury Parish it was possible to carry out our annual community spring clean of the new & old Churchyards, footpaths and car park getting them ready for the coming year. There was an age range spanning 8 decades.

We were blessed with a lovely sunny day and having the support of our Vicar Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu and his children

The work included- Collecting and removing all the fallen branches and twigs, getting the footpaths cleared back to the path edges and swept. Refreshing the area of planting at the bottom of the Church steps. Weeding the mound at the entrance to the Church car park and resetting the compost bin at the entrance to the new churchyard.

As in previous years we are most grateful to Charlie Whigham for disposing of all the cleared vegetation on his bonfire.

Roger Simons

Community Club

'3 course lunch for £13'

Where: New College Training Restaurant, North Star Campus, Swindon SN2 1DY

When: Thursday 23rd April (Not our usual last Thursday of the month)

There will be a choice of menu with meals being cooked and served by students under the guidance of their lecturers.

Places are open to all but limited in number so must be pre-booked by 10th April by contacting sue_reade@btinternet.com or tel. 01793 710208. Car sharing will then be organised.

CHURCH MATTERS

APRIL SERVICES 2026 IN ASHBURY, COMPTON, LONGCOT & FERNHAM WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

The service times are correct at the time of writing (16 March). 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.

Thursday 2 April	7.00pm	Holy Communion	
Maundy Thursday		with foot washing	Compton
Friday 3 April	12.00pm	Hour at the Cross	Longcot
Good Friday	2.00pm	Hour at the Cross	Ashbury
Sunday 5 April	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
Easter Day	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 12 April	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	
		with Baptism	Ashbury
Sunday 19 April	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Morning Worship	Ashbury
	4.00pm	Songs of Praise (TBC)	Fernham
Sunday 26 April	9.00am	Matins	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
		with Choir	
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

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

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 also on the weekly sheet and on Facebook.

Ashbury prayer cycle for April- 5 April- Berrycroft Lane, 12 April- Chapel Lane, 19 April- Church Lane, 26 April- College Farm Lane

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 Patrick Mabhunu (associatevicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk on 07471 434276) or Rev'd Janet Anderson-Mackenzie on 07821 474 711

Support your local church or the Benefice 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

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 £10

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.

Thank you!

'TEA & CHAT' 1st Tuesday of each month from 2.00 to 3.30pm 'Tea & Chat' will take place in 'the cabin' at **Ashbury** Ambassador Bible Church (known also as Ashbury Evangelical Free Church). Plenty of coffee and cake to be had as well as 'tea and chat'. Admission free. All welcome, including children.

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.



UFFINGTON MUSEUM

Caroline Grundy

Opening Saturday 4th April

Now we're headed into Spring we're delighted to be opening for the season on Easter Saturday, 4th April! The Launch Party for our Friends and supporters will be immediately followed by our first open afternoon between 2-5pm.

We are open every weekend 2-5pm and Bank Holidays from now until the last weekend in October.

Every year we hold a new exhibition, alongside our regular displays. This year it is **Myths, Monuments and Memory** curated by Jane and Lauren Golding. They explore the myths and legends woven into the Uffington White Horse landscape — from St George and the Dragon to the story of Weland the Smith. It highlights how this landscape and its monuments have carried significance from prehistory to the present day.

You may have seen our flyers asking people to share their stories and memories. There's still time to contribute to the exhibition as we'll continue to collect your memories throughout the year. Click on this QR code to fill in our online form or contact us using Uffington museum email below.



Monthly Talks in Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington 7.30pm - £5, £3 Friends

This year's talk programme has got off to a flying start, with Uncovering Oxfordshire's Dinosaur Highway in February bringing in our largest audience ever, followed by the enjoyable Black Wantage in March, describing the den of iniquity that Wantage became in the early 19th century.

Our next on 6th **April will be Coleshill – Nerve Centre of the British Resistance.** Coleshill House in the Oxfordshire countryside served as the top-secret General Headquarters (GHQ) for the Auxiliary Units, often called "Churchill's Secret Army," during World War II. This secluded estate trained roughly 3,000–3,500 volunteers in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and assassination to combat a potential German invasion from behind enemy lines. This retelling includes a cast of characters ranging from 13-year-old schoolchildren, saboteurs bristling with explosives to the terrifying village postmistress!

Our upcoming talks and recordings of past talks are available to view on our website <https://www.uffingtonmuseum.co.uk/talks.html>.

Contact Us

We're looking forward to welcoming everyone back to the museum after Easter! In the meantime, for anything museum related please email our curator Karen Pilcher at uffingtonmuseum@gmail.com

ASHBURY, Berks.

A. F. HOBBS AND CHAMBERS

are instructed to sell by auction in 3 lots on Monday, 2nd May, 1921, at the "Rose and Crown" Inn, Ashbury, at 6.30 o'clock in the evening, about 18 acres of

GRASS KEEPING

being Pounds Close, the property of Mr T. S. Taylor, adjoining the Shrivenham road, at Drew Hill, which can be mown and afterwards fed with cattle and horses only, and 2 enclosures belonging to Mr Henry Rosher, between Ashbury and Shrivenham, to be fed with cattle and horses only to Oct. 31st next.

Further particulars may be obtained from the Auctioneers, Faringdon and Cirencester.

Country Matters

Writing March 19th at last some lovely days after a long, wet winter. The countryside is coming alive. This morning was my first hearing of the early migrant, the chiff-chaff. They have now joined our residents' dawn chorus with the equally repetitive great tit, alongside the blue tits and flutey black birds with rooks and corvids all busy at nestbuilding. Listen for the yaffle of the green woodpecker and the drumming as they and the greater spotted prepare their nesting sites.



Green woodpecker



Chiff-chaff

On the farms David Williams at Lower Idstone Farm is busy lambing. The spring calving herds at Bishopstone and Starveall are back in production again, going out to grass whilst those still waiting to calve have up to now remained inside.

On our farm the drier land at last can now be prepared for a spring malting barley crop, One field has been ploughed and pressed before the drill and another large block on the high downs will be just disced to incorporate the dying greening crop that we are encouraged to plant over winter. Our cattle are still inside being fattened.

Disappointingly TB testing has identified our first reactor for four years. Now slaughtered, we learn that there were no TB legions in the lungs. Frustrating no further epidemiology is undertaken to clearly identify the veracity of the TB cull. Meanwhile we now will have to bear the more frequent testing to get clear again which is a serious hassle gathering the cattle twice in a week for the skin test at grass over the summer.

This spring I have been given two packets of seeds for the garden, one after attending the memorial in Hertfordshire to the late June Wilmers a remarkable lady, late of Kingston Wilmers. She supported her son -in-laws seed flower business. The second, of wildflowers, has come my way from Toyota after my silver Mitsubishi died, replaced by a hybrid Rav 4.

Our gardens and roadsides are and have been beautifully enhanced by snow drop, daffodil, narcissus, primrose, hellebore, hyacinth and anemone. What is so rewarding is that these perennials are such good value, appearing year after year and some like snow drop and primrose can even proliferate.

Look out for the cowslips along the A 419 to Cirencester and beyond. In the woods look out for the blue bells, dogs' mercury, woodland anemone, violet and the early purple orchids on heavier sites.

Butterflies are only beginning. I have seen a peacock and brimstone but no orange tips as yet.

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

Defibrillators: On the wall by the School entrance and outside the Rose and Crown.

St Mary's Ashbury Parochial Church Council

Church wardens: Maggie Simons 01793 710801 Richard Green 01793 791310

Vicar (Shrivenham) Revd Patrick Mabunu [mail to:](mailto:mail%20to%3A%3A)

vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk 07471 434276

or Rev'd Dr Janet AndersonMacKenzie

(associate.vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07821 474 711

Ashbury Village Hall

Chris Millard mailto:villagehall@ashbury.org.uk

Secretary Sandra Dagnall 07773 379703 sandrajdagnall@gmail.com

Bookings: Laura 07766 338551 and Steve Pilkington 0773 9692076 [mail to:](mailto:mail%20to%3A%3A)

steve_pilkington@yahoo.co.uk

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

Preschool Headteacher Tim Miller 01793 710259 mail to: office@ash.cambrianlt.org

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: Emma Markham emma.markham@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Witney constituency: Charlie Maynard:

charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk

Newsletter entries for May 2026. Submit your entries by **April 25th** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionturner@me.com 01793 710302 see also www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.

All views expressed are those of the contributors.