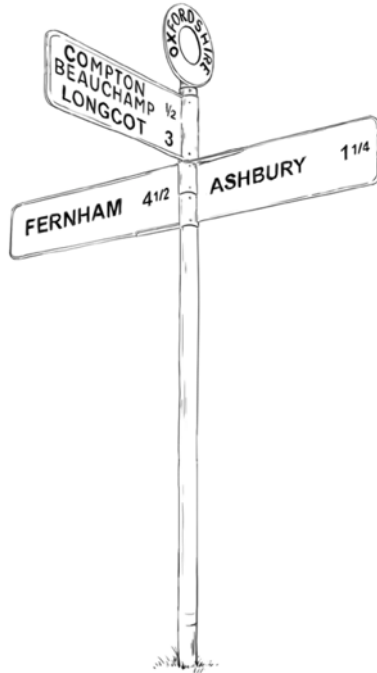


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
DECEMBER 2024/ JANUARY 2025**



**Community Club Christmas lunch 19th
Stations of the Nativity 20th**



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

As days are getting colder and Christmas is drawing near, it is the perfect time to reflect on the warmth we can bring to others and to ourselves. Kindness is one of the most beautiful gifts we can give, not just to the world but also to ourselves. When we help someone in need, offer a smile, or share a moment of compassion, we are not only lifting them up, but also enriching our own souls.

Remember, kindness starts within. Be gentle with yourself, celebrate your progress, and allow yourself moments of rest and reflection. Taking care of yourself allows you to share your best energy with others.

This time of the year reminds us of the power of community and small acts of love. If you see someone vulnerable, buy them hot drink or some food, or simply offer a kind word. Your act of kindness could be the light that keeps them going. Let us also take a moment to embrace gratitude. Focus on the blessings around you, the roof over your head, the people who love you, and the strength that carries you through each day.

Gratitude fuels positivity and hope, turning even the darkest days into opportunities to grow and shine. Have a blessed Christmas!

Patrick Mabhunu

Ashbury

Stations of the Nativity– Fri 20th 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

NEW RESIDENTS to Ashbury, Idstone and 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 Jackie Baker (710358) for Ashbury & Idstone or Anne Taylor (07491 035582) for Kingstone Winslow.

Ashbury Neighbourhood Watch: Begun in 1988 by Maurice Middlemist and later meeting under the leadership of Ray Gigg, Peggy Leon, Roger Simons and others up until the onset of Covid; it has now been largely overtaken by technological changes to the way information is shared across the parish. For that reason it is proposed to close the scheme, with the agreement of all the existing co-ordinators. We are aware that not everyone has access to social media; any comments may be made to the chairman Roger Simons or the Secretary, Nicola Foster.

Ashbury Community Club

This month's meeting will take the form of a 2 course lunch at The Rose & Crown on Thursday 19th December.

Members and friends should book a place ASAP by contacting sue_reade@btinternet.com or tel. 710208

The first meeting in the New Year will be on **Thursday 30th January at 2.30 pm** - details nearer the time.

We are currently planning events /outings for each month of 2025 and would love to hear from people willing to speak about their skills, hobbies, travels, charity work etc.

Village Hall Quiz Night

The Village Hall Team would like to say thank you to all of the 90 'quizzers' who came last Saturday for the Village Hall Quiz and made it so fun and successful. We could not do it without you all!

It was an excellent evening with the quiz teams scratching their heads, having 'light bulb' moments dredging up buried facts, chatting, debating, laughing, mingling and making new friends; participants heartily supported the raffle and pitched in to make this a fun event. The wooden spoon was awarded to a delighted Church Lane team and the champions' shield to the euphoric Bunce's Dunces team from Idstone Road; congratulations to them and to everyone who took part.

A massive thank you to all of those involved from participants, quiz setters and markers, street co-ordinators, chilli chefs, spud cooks, bar persons, kitchen angels, Village Hall Team members, the Rose and Crown, the Baking Bee, Bloomfields, the Treatment Rooms and the Home Farm Shop, all of whom contributed to make this such a special community event.

We are also delighted to say that around £1100 was raised which will go towards the running of Ashbury Village Hall, an important charity run community space for Ashbury and neighbouring village members. This also enables ongoing improvements to be made, such as modernising the technology within the hall, giving projector/sound capabilities - watch this space to learn what this could mean in terms of upcoming events.

The Village Hall Team fully intends to continue with the annual quiz and will review all aspects of this year's quiz night and incorporate any improvements for next year when the Team will be pleased to welcome you back. If you have any feedback, do drop Sandra an email on sandrajdagnall@gmail.com.

CHURCH MATTERS

On Wednesday 6th November St Andrews Church, Shrivenham was full to witness Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu's Institution, Induction and Installation as Vicar of the Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice by Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester. Representatives from all the seven churches in the Benefice were there to enthusiastically welcome Patrick. A special highlight was when members of the Zimbabwean Mothers' Union choir led the singing and dancing as a Shona hymn was sung. During the service the new vicar rings the church bell, traditionally the number of chimes indicates how many years the new vicar will stay. We counted 25½! Welcome Patrick, Priscilla, Tadu, Blessing and Taku.

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

The service times are correct at the time of writing (20 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 1 December	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 8 December	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
	4.00pm	Christingle service	Longcot
Thursday 12 December	10.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 15 December	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Third Sunday service	Ashbury
	6.00pm	Carol service	Compton
Thurs. 19 December	5.00pm	Carols on Elmside Green	Fernham
Saturday 21 December	5.00pm	Carol service with Choir & Bells	Ashbury

Sunday 22 December	9.00am	Matins (BCP)	Compton
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
	6.30pm	Carol service	Longcot
Tuesday 24 December	4.00pm	Crib service	Ashbury
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Longcot
Wednesday 25 December	11.00am	Family Service + Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 29 December	10.30am*	Benefice Holy Communion	Fernham
Sunday 5 January	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Thursday 9 January	10.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 12 January	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	Ashbury
Sunday 19 January	9.00am	Matins (BCP)(TBC)	Compton
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Third Sunday service	Ashbury
Sunday 26 January	10.30am*	Benefice Holy Communion with Choir	Shrivenham

**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- 1st Church Lane, 8th College Farm Lane, 15th Ashdown Estate, 22nd High Street, 29th Idstone Road.

Ashbury prayer cycle for January- 5th Idstone, 12th Kingstone Winslow, 19th Malthouse Close, 26th Odstone Farm & Cottages.

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 (vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07471 434276).

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 £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.

CHRISTMAS CARDS Christmas cards are a wonderful way to connect, but they can also contribute to waste. With some mindful adjustments, you can keep the tradition of sending greetings while reducing its environmental impact. Digital cards or personalized video messages can be a modern, eco-friendly alternative to traditional paper cards. If you prefer sending physical cards, opt for those made from recycled paper, and avoid cards with glitter or plastic embellishments, which make them non-recyclable. If you would like to send just one card to all your local friends, then please consider hanging a card on the 'Christmas card tree' in St Mary's Church and the Rose and Crown. Top tips for a more sustainable Christmas can be found on the World Wildlife Fund website [Top tips for a sustainable Christmas | WWF](#)

'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.

Country Matters

Farmers feel betrayed and worried by Rachel Reeve's "tractor tax" budget especially after assurances to the contrary. Public life is irreparably damaged by extolling such lies. What is more, government sources having rushed this with only superficial consultation continue to justify this tax, and are in denial of those farms that will be affected. Past policy encouraged older farmers to "die with their boots on". Many in their 80's and 90's now have live another seven years to escape the tax. Here, along the downs the farms are mostly arable and large but even in the vale where farms tend to be smaller with livestock, nearly all will have to pay. which is the opposite of the government's plea. Very few commercial farms can survive on their own with under 300 acres, usually with no employed labour.

For farming couples this new tax is to be levied on business assets exceeding 3 million at 20% but in another departure, this includes all pensions. Take a 300 acre farm valued at £10,000/ acre = £3m. Most farmhouses are worth another 1 m. Add pensions and working capital. It is not difficult to arrive at £5m. The balance of £2m taxed on death at 20% = £400,000. The comparable tax due on 1,200 acres = £1.6 m. However not all families will be able to claim this £3m allowance. Single or divorced farmers are entitled to only 1.5m and if the farmer has moved out of the main farmhouse they will lose another £175,000 in allowances. In the worst case scenario only £1.35 m allowances could be claimed leaving the 300 acre farm to pay £730,000.

Whilst some businesses might absorb these taxes, farming at best makes modest returns on capital and smaller farms rely heavily on family labour unable to absorb further debt. Some farm tenants with pensions saved to buy a house for their retirement could also be trapped by this new tax on their assets or they could be given notice by landlords with an estate needing to sell where the tenant's term expires under a farm business tenancy giving vacant possession.

With Labours' rise in employer's National Insurance contributions and this tax on farming businesses, both are counter-productive to employment and business efficiency. Just at time when businesses need to grow to survive, they are going to get smaller. The logic points to a decline in family farms, and an increase in suicides to beat the tax beginning in April 2026, a decline in land values and in a generation a fundamental restructuring of who owns our green and pleasant land. Even now the government needs admit the wrong and soften the impact on family farms.

Richard Green

(As always, contributor's views are their own)

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 Mabhunu <mailto:vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk>

07471 434276

Ashbury Village Hall

Chris Millard <mailto:villagehall@ashbury.org.uk>

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

Bookings: Laura 07766 338551 and Steve Pilkington 0773 9692076 mail to:

steve_pilkington@yahoo.co.uk

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

Headteacher Tim Miller 01793 710259 <mailto:office@ash.faringdonlearningtrust.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: Yvonne Constance: 01235 751475/07976934884

yvonne.constance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Witney constituency: Charlie Maynard: charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk

Newsletter entries for February '25. Submit your entries for **February** by **25th January** to:

M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionturner@me.com 01793 710302 For more of

of "what's on" and local information see the Ashbury Village Website

www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.