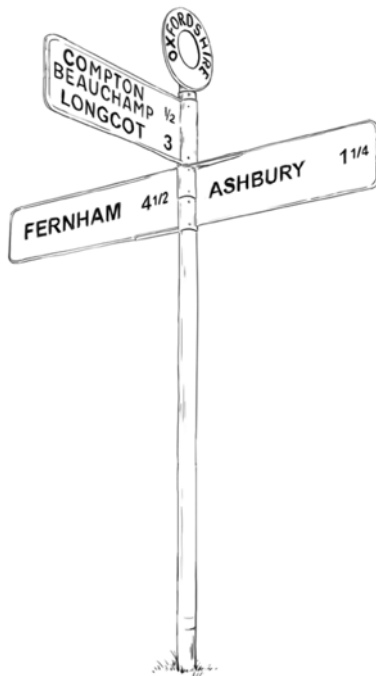


**ASHBURY  
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM  
NEWS  
DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026**



**Community Club Christmas Lunch 18<sup>th</sup> Dec  
Stations of the Nativity 19<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**From Zimbabwe to Rome 10<sup>th</sup> Jan  
Burns Night 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan  
Community Club 29<sup>th</sup> RDA**

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

So what can the vicar write about in December?...

Oh yes, Christmas.

I wonder what is your favourite part of Christmas?

Is it the presents? Or the food? Or the decorations? Maybe it's the parties, and the dressing up. You might love Christmas carols or the joy and excitement of coming to church in the middle of the night.

I wonder what the worst part of Christmas is for you?

It could be any of the list of things which are other people's favourites, or maybe this Christmas or all Christmases will bring difficult times, sad memories as well as joy. Presents are a stressful subject for all, especially if you have demanding children who want everything they see on the television or that their friends are getting for Christmas. One year for us involved the tricky purchase of a pink Nintendo DS, an item which was out of stock nearly all over the country. Obtaining it involved someone standing in the supermarket while a freshly delivered consignment was sorted through and the one and only pink one extracted and taken quickly to the till before anyone else spotted it.

So this year, with everyone a little more, or even a lot more, concerned about money how are we going to deal with Christmas? What will be top of our present hunting list?

Why do we give presents at Christmas anyway? We give presents to remind ourselves of the present which God gave us at Christmas. God gave us Jesus, who would be the proof and the means of God showing his love for us throughout all generations.

One of my pet Christmas hates is the whole, "be good or Father Christmas won't bring you any presents" issue. It is an international issue with children, especially in Europe, all waiting to see if they have been good enough for Saint Nicholas to bring them any presents. So why does it annoy me? It annoys me because it is not at all what Christmas is about. Christmas is about God giving us a present that we didn't deserve, we hadn't been good children (in fact quite the opposite), but because God loves us, he gave us this wonderful gift of love and life anyway.

This Christmas I hope you will be able to bear this in mind, amongst all the stress of the practicalities of Christmas, let us not forget the reason behind our festival. This year there might be fewer pennies to spend on the presents used to remember God's gift to us, but that doesn't diminish the magnitude of God's gift to us, and maybe it

might help us with the remembering even more.

I do hope that you will be able to come and celebrate Christmas this year with us at some point in church. In the benefice this year there are services for all tastes Christingle, Crib, Stations of the Nativity, Carol, late night communion and family communion, look in the Christmas card leaflet for further details. Coming to church to remember God's gift of Jesus, like the gift itself, is free. So I hope we will see you sometime over the Christmas season.

Every Blessing

**Janet**

## **Ashbury**

**From Zimbabwe to Rome and then Ashbury and Shrivenham**

**On Saturday 10th January 2026 Ashbury Village Hall**

**Starting at 12.30 with a Zimbabwean lunch**

**Following on from our successful event last June we are pleased to hold the second part of Patrick's story with slides and time to ask questions from the floor.**

**Tickets available at £15 per person to include lunch and soft drinks**

**BACS payment to: Treasurers Account PCC of Ashbury**

**Sort Code: 30 13 35      Account Number: 01182960**

**Or**

**Cash to Maggie Simons**

**01793 710801 or [maggiemsimons@outlook.com](mailto:maggiemsimons@outlook.com)**

## **Community Club**

**Christmas Lunch at The Rose & Crown**

**Thursday 18th December**

**If you would like to join us, please contact Sue Reade by 12th Dec.**

**Email [sue\\_reade@btinternet.com](mailto:sue_reade@btinternet.com) or tel. 01793 710208**

**Thursday, 29th January, 2.30pm. Ashbury Village Hall    Enriching lives through horses**

**Catherine Jessop from Kingstone Winslow, together with members of the Shifford**

**Carriage Driving Group (RDA) will tell us about the work of the Riding for Disabled**

**Association and how they provide equine therapy to the disabled**

**community through carriage driving, riding and other equine related activities.**

**Their philosophy - Whether you have a disability, are a horse or a volunteer "It is what you CAN DO that counts".**

**Entrance £2 includes tea & biscuits after the talk with time to chat and find out more from the speakers.**

**Everyone welcome - no need to book.**

## STATIONS OF THE NATIVITY – FRI 19th 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:

Ashbury High Street will be closed for the event, but please follow the Directions of our Traffic Wardens as you travel to and from the event

Wear warm clothes, sturdy shoes, carry a torch and keep little ones close

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

**Below is a cutting from the Swindon advertiser from 24<sup>th</sup> December 1974 with a photograph of Ashbury's first Mary and Joseph- Diane and Bill Lovegrove, 51 years ago this year!**

**The article accompanying the picture:**



(The shepherds were played by Mr Tombs and David Burson, not Burden as stated.)





**Ashbury Village Quiz** - The quiz on 8th November was great fun with over 80 participants completing a number of rounds with a good blend of head scratching and laughter. "Idstone's Odds & Sods" was the winning team so congratulations to Annemieke, Darren, Greg, Andrea, Jack and Heather. Our thanks to everyone who was involved and for the participants who all gamely helped us raise further funds for the village hall.

**What's on at the Village Hall:**

Thursday 11th and Friday 12th December - Wreath making evenings.  
Friday 23rd January - Burns Night.

**Burns Night 2026** A traditional Burns Night Supper and entertainment event will take place in Ashbury Village Hall on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 from 7.00pm. Enjoy a 'wee dram' to toast the haggis, a traditional Burns Night Haggis Supper and be entertained by the Poetry and Music of Robert Burns recited by members of our community. Plus finish off the evening on a happy note with a Scottish sing along and join in a couple of Scottish dances.

Early booking is recommended as places are limited-booking closes on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Tickets £16 pp 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 contact Sandra Dagnall [sandrajdagnall@gmail.com](mailto:sandrajdagnall@gmail.com)  
**And if you'd be willing to recite a poem or sing a song on the evening contact Judy Clarke [judithannclarke@outlook.com](mailto:judithannclarke@outlook.com)**

**Compton Beauchamp**

**St Swithun's carol service**, is Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 6pm, all would be very welcome. We offer drinks and nibbles afterwards...!

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

The service times are correct at the time of writing (3 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.

<b>Sunday 7 December</b>	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
	4.00pm	Christingle service	Longcot

<b>Sunday 14 December</b>	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
	6.00pm	Carol service	Compton
<b>Thurs. 18 December</b>	5.00pm	Carols on Elmside Green	Fernham
<b>Saturday 20 December</b>	5.00pm	Carol service with Choir & Bells	Ashbury
<b>Sunday 21 December</b>	11.00am	Morning Prayer	Ashbury
	6.30pm	Carol service	Longcot
<b>Wednesday 24 December</b>	4.00pm	Crib service	Ashbury
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Longcot
<b>Thursday 25 December</b>	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	10.30am	Family Service + Communion	Ashbury
<b>Sunday 28 December</b>	10.30am*	Benefice Holy Communion	Fernham

## 2026

<b>Sunday 4 January</b>	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
<b>Sunday 11 January</b>	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (to be decided)	Ashbury
<b>Sunday 18 January</b>	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Third Sunday service	Ashbury
<b>Sunday 25 January</b>	9.00am	Matins (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

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

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 on the weekly sheet and on Facebook.

**Ashbury prayer cycle** for December- 7th Chapel Lane, 14th Church Lane, 21st College Farm Road, 28th Ashdown Estate

**Ashbury prayer cycle** for January- 4th High Street, 11th Idstone Road, 18th Idstone, 25th Kingstone Winslow

**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 Mabhunnu (vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07471 434276 or Rev'd Dr Janet Anderson-MacKenzie (associatevicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07821 474711`

**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.



## Country Matters

I am writing this just before Rachel Reeves's budget on Nov 26. The farming community does not expect moderation to her proposed inheritance tax raid aimed at farms and businesses. Her proposals have kept lawyers and accountants busy over the summer trying to find measures that will mitigate the damage. For the elderly who are unlikely to survive seven years the tax will not be found out of income which will force sales. Farming confidences have also been dented by a recent drop in the milk price and lacklustre returns in the arable sector where very smart machinery labours in vain to make a tiny profit or a loss if crops are scorched by drought.

However, one bright sector has been beef prices. Prices to the farmer have risen from £5/ kg dead weight to £6.50 + over the past year and from 2023 when prices were nearer £4/kg. To keep sales buoyant some of these rises have not been passed on to the consumer as the trade usually tries to average out the highs and lows. Even so, the restaurant trade is obliged to price the best steak cuts above £30 for 8 ounces. We have beef cattle grazing marginal land and the best sorts can now come to over £2000 compared with half that figure a few years ago.

Increasingly there is an alternative red meat that can be sourced so much cheaper. Venison and game come into this category. We are now in the season of game shooting. By law game may not be shot on a Sunday. Pheasants may be shot Oct 1st-Feb 1st, and partridges Sept 1st -Feb 1st. Deer, with no predator bar man have never been so numerous. In the south we see fallow, roe and muntjac. There could be 800 fallow in the five square miles round Ashdown Park. We have installed deer fencing to protect our crops. Historically Ashdown was a deer park with ordnance survey maps still recording "park pale", the former boundary ditch and fence. The fallow bucks have these striking palmate antlers with spotted hides before these turn grey/brown over winter. They are alert and cautious and not easy to shoot. Fallow and roe game laws permit shooting does Nov 1st – March 31st with fallow bucks Aug 1st-April 30th and roe bucks April 1st-Oct 31st.

Recently the Royal Oak, Bishopstone featured venison steaks and venison goulash on their menus. The steaks are lean and will match beef steak. Plucking machines make short work of the feathers or game can be easily skinned. Here on our doorstep we have this natural abundance of an almost free organic and unfarmed source of meat that human carnivores should be tucking into for a change at cheaper prices too, especially in comparison with beef.

**Richard Green**

## Contacts

### Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman: Christopher Prentice 01793 710821 [chair@ashbury.org.uk](mailto:chair@ashbury.org.uk)

Clerk to the council: Laura Evans email [clerk@ashbury.org.uk](mailto: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 Mabhunú

<mailto:vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk> 07471 434276

or Rev'd Dr Janet Anderson-MacKenzie (associate

[vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:sandrajdagnall@gmail.com)

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

[steve\\_pilkington@yahoo.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) and Viral Patel

[viral.patel@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:viral.patel@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**County Councillor:** Emma Markham [emma.markham@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:emma.markham@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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

[charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk)

**Newsletter entries for February 2026.** Submit your entries by **January 24** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. [marionlturner@me.com](mailto:marionlturner@me.com) 01793 710302 see also [www.ashbury.org.uk](http://www.ashbury.org.uk) and the community page on Facebook.

*All views expressed are those of the contributors.*