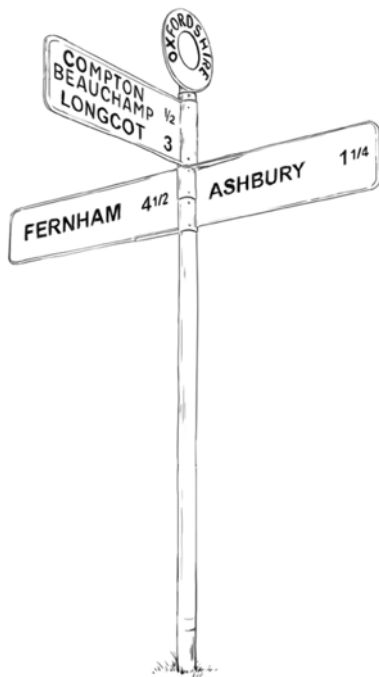


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
MAY 2025**



V-E Day Commemoration 8-9th

Plant and cake sale for the Prospect Hospice 10th

Clarinet Collective Longcot 10th

Beat the Bounds walk 17th

Community Club 29th

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

If you have been walking around Ashbury and Kingston Winslow over the last few months you will have seen quite a few houses being rethatched, with their distinctive honey coloured and neat appearance once the scaffolding has been removed. Some twenty years since it was last done, our cottage is now being rethatched and it has been fascinating to watch the journey from stripping off the old, degraded thatch to see its smart new “coat” emerging.

It is fascinating both to witness the craftsmanship of the workers and also to consider that the thatch inside the attic, which is not renewed, contains seeds from as far back as 1580, when the original cottage was built. Thatching is a craft that has changed little over the years, and demands precision, patience and a methodical approach. This is one job which will not be taken over by AI any time soon!

Another interesting feature of this process has been the way that local wildlife have reacted to it. Fortunately thus far we have had no problem with rodents, but almost as soon as the thatchers’ van has driven away a male and female pheasant appear like clockwork and forage for suitable “leftovers,” presumably for their nest. A bevy of squirrels perch on the scaffolding and enjoy an “all you can eat” feast, spitting out the husks quite nonchalantly. And we enjoy the enhanced vistas provided by the scaffold boards to watch the sunset.

In some ways this feels like a little bit of escapism from the unrelenting news of conflict and discord around the world. Whatever your politics or world view it is hard not to be saddened by so much unwarranted suffering and exploitation, especially of the more vulnerable in our society. We have so much to be thankful for in our community – think of the recent panto and concert performances, the churchyard “cleanup” which brought so many people together, the spring sunshine and of course the celebration of Easter across the benefice.

The experience of having our cottage rethatched and the attendant escapades of the birds and animals living nearby has been a source of interest and wonder, a reminder to observe and appreciate what is around us, and, in the words of St Paul’s letter to the Philippians, that we should “think about whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable”. It doesn’t diminish suffering but resetting our focus can help us renew our energy and appreciate the good that is also around us.

Isobel Weller

Ashbury

Beat the Bounds Walk

This year the annual medieval 'Beat the Bounds' walk along the parish boundaries will take place on **Saturday May 17th, starting at 8.30am in front of the pub**. An Ashbury tradition that is at least 500 years old, the parish boundary walk was historically used to confirm the boundaries of the parish and ensure that neighbouring parishes hadn't encroached on any of our land. Everyone is welcome on this walk, including children and dogs, and 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. It's a circular route 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!

Plant and Cake Sale for Prospect Hospice- Saturday 10 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!

Margaret Smith and Sarah Loney

Community Club

Thursday, 29th May at 2.30pm, Village Hall.

An illustrated talk by Margaret Andrews -

'Svalbard – The Cold Coast. A photographic journey in the Arctic'

There will be photos of the wildlife and also everyday activities on this group of islands situated between Norway and the North Pole.

This meeting is open to everyone with no need to book.

Entrance fee of £2 includes tea & biscuits.

Christian Aid Collection - 11-17 May

All households in Ashbury, Kingstone Winslow and Idstone will receive a donation envelope. If you would like to help some of the world's poorest people please put your donation in the envelope and return it to your local collection point (details will be on the envelope). Thank you.

V-E Day Commemoration

Thursday May 8th 2025 commemorates the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day), with a national programme of activities for communities to unite, remember and celebrate the significance of this day. Everyone is welcome to come together and join the activities being held in Ashbury, as our Church bells ring out and our Rose and Crooners choir lead us in the national hymn, "*I Vow To Thee My Country*" at the War Memorial.

On Friday 9th May, all are welcome to join the children at Ashbury Primary School for a community event.

Thursday 8th May:

18:30 - Cathedrals and Churches will ring out in a united celebration: St Mary's Church bells join the celebration.

20:45 - The Rose and Crooners will lead wartime singalong songs in the Rose and Crown, adjourning to the War Memorial by 9:15pm.

21:15 - Gather at our War Memorial - the lighting of national beacons will be represented in the Village by lanterns to illuminate our War Memorial. Join us as we prepare to sing the National Hymn. Note some local roads will briefly be closed at this time.

21:30 - The National Hymn will be sung by choirs across the nation: Our choir will lead us at our lantern lit War Memorial for the singing of *I Vow To Thee My Country* (please bring torches).

Friday 9th May:

14:00 til 16:00 - Community event at Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE (A) Primary School: Ashbury school invite everyone to join in their community event on Friday 9th May between 2pm and 4pm, featuring a performance from the Rose and Crooners - look out for further details.

If anyone has any questions, please contact Sandra Dagnall at sandrajdagnall@gmail.com.

VILLAGE SAFARI SUPPER - SAVE THE DATE !! Saturday 21st June

This popular and fun culinary event will return this year in the homes (or gardens weather permitting) of residents in Ashbury and Kingstone Winslow. More information to come in the June newsletter and on social media.

Contact: judithanclarke@outlook.com

CHURCHYARD SPRING-CLEAN 2024

Thanks to the time and work given by a record 36 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 9 decades.

We were blessed with a lovely sunny day with just a light wind and having the support of our Vicar Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu and his son.

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 top of the footpath 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.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JUNE 21st – Safari Supper

JULY 19TH - Zimbabwean evening in the Village Hall

JULY 20th – Zimbabwean Church Service in St Marys Church

Longcot

Spring Concert with the Clarinet Collective on Saturday 10th May

The Clarinet Collective returns to St. Mary's Church, Longcot on Saturday 10th May to present another evening of relaxing and uplifting music for clarinet sextet. The programme features new arrangements of well-known works by Bach, Mozart, Dvorak and Ravel alongside popular numbers from the twentieth century, including songs from My Fair Lady and, to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, Vera Lynn's wartime classic, It's a Lovely Day tomorrow.

Themed flower arrangements can be viewed in the church at the concert and also every day during South Oxfordshire Artweek, from 11th - 18th May.

Admission is free with a retiring collection. All seats should be reserved in advance by emailing victorialmedcalf@gmail.com Profits will be shared between St. Mary's Church and the Longcot Village Trust. The bar will be open from 5.30 pm and at the interval.



St Mary's Church Longcot

May brings a concert, a history display and flowers in St Mary's church Longcot in support of Oxfordshire Artweek. On 10th May Vicky Medcalf and the Clarinet Collective return for a Spring Concert (victorialmedcalf@gmail.com to reserve seats). Janet Evins has a display in church entitled Longcot Church – Change and Continuity, and the flower team will decorate to this theme. From 11-17 May the church is open daily from 10-4 and we hope you will visit and enjoy a festive week of music, history and flowers.

CHURCH MATTERS
MAY SERVICES IN ASHBURY, COMPTON, LONGCOT & FERNHAM
WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

The service times are correct at the time of writing (14 April). 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 4 May	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 11 May	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) Compton	
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Morning Prayer	Ashbury
Sunday 18 May	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Iona Morning Prayer	Ashbury
Sunday 25 May	10.30am*	Benefice Holy Communion with Baptism & Choir Compton	

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

Ashbury prayer cycle for May- 4th May Ildstone Road, 11th May Ildstone, 18th May Kingstone Winslow, 25th May Malthouse Close.

Virus Precautions at Services

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

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.

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 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.

ASHBURY.

FUNERAL OBSEQUIES.—A large concourse of people assembled in the Baptist Chapel on Sunday afternoon, to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of the late Amariah Day, whose remains were interred in the little burial ground attached to that place of worship. Mr. Robert Piggott, of Swindon, conducted the service, and delivered a most impressive address. The deceased being well-known in Highworth, Wantage, Shrivenham, etc., many persons from those places attended the service.

Faringdon Advertiser 29 May 1886

Country Matters

Writing this in the middle of April farmers and gardeners are hoping some rain is on the way after a nearly a month without precipitation and plenty of blue skies. Cold nights have slowed up the spring growth of grass and crops but rape is now in flower except where the pigeons have been nibbling. Land in the Vale eventually dried allowing us to try again to grow crops down there, this time with spring barley.

This time of the year there is a terrific dawn chorus to greet the early risers. Bird song does not seem to depend on size. Small residents like robins, wrens and chaffinches are especially vocally prominent and migrants like the chiff chaff from the middle of March and more recently the blackcap are all singing lustily. I have yet to see a swallow or martin! Penny has seen some visiting wheatears on the downs, easily recognised by their white rump. I read recently their name is said to be a derivation of white-ass. I do not think this was April 1st. These phone apps on birdsong are a brilliant aid to identification and this has enabled us to record greenfinches in our garden which are easy to miss unless the light is perfect.

Turning to larger birds, ravens are more numerous. I first saw one 30-40 years ago climbing "sugar loaf " near Abergavenny in Wales. Recently I have heard them three days running and seen five together very high in the sky. They are early nesters and Hugh Smith from Woolstone tells me there are raven chicks in the Ashdown woods and I think we have a nest at Zulu Farm in an oak tree, perhaps for the first time. With their massive beak they will predate a weakly young lamb. When much younger and a dairy farmer I remember getting a new born calf in from the fields whose ear had been partially chewed off. We blamed that then on the attentions of a fox overnight.

Everyone is noticing how brilliant and numerous is the impact of primroses this year. They are a real yellow Easter blessing and will just hang on for the festival. They seem to have benefited hugely from the earlier wet time and the sun more recently. To benefit from a flower that propagates itself even without assistance is especially rewarding. The pretty, early, purple flowers of honesty by self- seeding is another show that can occur without effort and worth a small presence in a garden. Several times I have previously mentioned hedgehogs in our garden and we have moved them in the past because our spaniel would not give them rest. One or two are back. We saw one with a torch balled up one evening. There is further evidence of their black strip of poo on the lawn to greet you first thing in the morning. Only recently Have I learnt this, previously assuming it was cat poo. **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 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](mailto: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 June '25. Submit your entries for **June** by **23 May** 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.