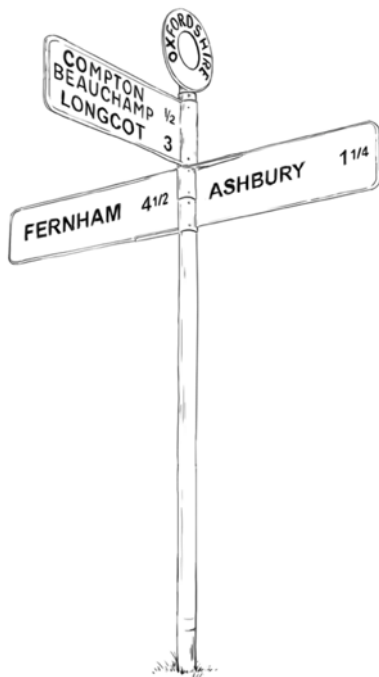


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
OCTOBER 2025**



Concert Longcot St Mary's 4th

Village Quiz 8th

Gala Evening 18th

Community Club 30th

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

One of my favourite gardening books is called “A Gentle Plea for Chaos” by Mirabel Osler, published in 1989. More of a memoir than a “how to” manual, it describes her experiences in her garden in Shropshire and was said by a critic to send “a blast of fresh air through the stuffy rooms of the English gardening world” when it was first published. It prefigures the so-called rewilding movement, as her “gentle plea” was for gardeners to allow the magic back into their gardens by handing back the reins (just a little or a lot) to nature. Self-sown plants weaving a tapestry within garden beds was, to Mirabel, idyllic, unplanned and imperfectly perfect. This contrasts sharply with more formal gardens, an extreme version being Versailles which our younger daughter visited in June and clocked 14 miles of walking around the most amazing and immaculate gardens of the estate.

Anyone who has seen our garden will know that we tend towards the Osler school of horticulture, more by default than design. This summer has been challenging for anyone with a garden of whatever size, or an allotment, because of the hosepipe ban and the high temperatures which by the time you read this may be just a distant memory. Nevertheless, there have been examples of something else which can be elusive at many times in our lives, and that is hope. Between the cracks in paving stones outside our house, whilst other flowers and even weeds struggled, the tiniest mauve and yellow viola appeared and continued to bloom into September. And when you look around there are other examples of plants defying the odds and providing all the more pleasure as their bright colours stand out against otherwise parched ground or in an inhospitable environment.

To me these are symbols of hope: you have to look hard to find them sometimes, and they may be tiny, but they are there, and they remind us of the potential for beauty in dark times and places. You might want to look up the chorus by the Christian songwriter Graham Kendrick, whose first four lines are “Beauty for brokenness, Hope for despair, Lord, in the suffering, This is our prayer”. It also reminds me of a verse in Paul’s letter to the Romans, Chapter 15, verse 13: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Hope may be hard to find sometimes but is worth looking out for in unexpected places!

Isobel Weller

Ashbury

THE AUCTION OF PROMISES

The catalogue goes live on Friday 26th September and will be launched at the Badapple Theatre event.

The Auction Gala Night is Saturday 18th October, 7.30pm, in the Village Hall. Doors open at 6.30pm for a paying bar.

Over 40 amazing lots have generously been donated by local businesses and our fabulous community. Holidays, special events, meals, beauty treatments, helping hands - so much to choose from and something to suit everyone.

The full catalogue of lots and full bidding details will be published via the Village Email Group and be available on the Village Hall website page. Actual printed versions of the catalogue will also be available to review in the Baking Bee and the Rose & Crown, for those who prefer to flick through information rather than look online.

You can bid in advance using the special ballot boxes located at the Rose & Crown and the Baking Bee or raise your hand to bid live on Gala Night for one of these exceptional lots.

The evening will be a ticketed event on 18th October so that we ensure we stay within the prescribed maximum occupants for the village hall. Tickets will be available from the Village Hall team in due course.

If you have any queries, please contact Judy Clarke or Sandra Dagnall (judithannclarke@outlook.com, sandrajdagnall@gmail.com, phone 07773 379703).

Community Club

Thursday, October 30th, 2.30pm, Ashbury Village Hall

' Japan - the Trip of a Lifetime '

Lynne Phillips will be giving an illustrated talk about the amazing sights and culture of Japan discovered during her recent visit.

After the talk, there will be time to ask questions and enjoy tea & biscuits. All for £2 - no need to book.

Everyone welcome; further info from Jackie, 01793 710358.

Village Quiz 8th November 2025 - Sandra Dagnall will shortly be getting in touch with Street representatives to start planning for the annual village quiz, taking place in the village hall on 8th November 2025. This was great fun last year as neighbours pitted their wits against each other with the Idstone Road team emerging victorious!

We intend to have a slightly different format this year - all will be revealed in good time - but we will be providing a simple supper again and a cash bar.
Stand by! For any questions, please contact Sandra Dagnall directly.

Stations of the Nativity- We need your help!

Each year Ashbury is transformed into the town of Bethlehem as the Nativity story is reenacted in our village. And each year a couple who has been married that year in St Mary's Church is asked to play the parts of Mary & Joseph as we follow their wondrous journey.

This year unusually, there hasn't been a wedding in St Mary's – so is there a married couple (you don't need to have been married in our church) who would like to volunteer to take on this special role on Fri 19th December?

Please contact Judy Clarke (judithannclarke@outlook.com) if you can help

What's On at the Rose and Crown

We would like to introduce What's On at the Rose and Crown for October. There are plenty of events for all ages to join in with as well as regular opportunities for us to get together as a community, whether via the Rose and Crooners choir or simply utilising the Post Office.



Whats On - October

7th October - Libbys Craftersnoon! Come and make some halloween crafts! Free crafts for children from 3pm - 5pm

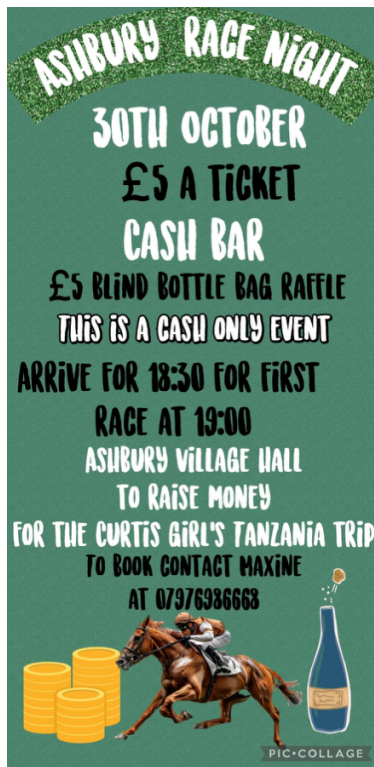
Saturday 11th - The Rose and Crooners go on tour! Be at the pub for their return, as I am sure they will be in fine voice!

25th October - Mens Breakfast - Meet at the pub at 9am, all welcome!

31st October - Trick or Treat at the pub, featuring Libby the Witch in her spooky cave, between 4pm and 7pm, followed by a Halloween extravaganza, with fancy dress and live music from the house band 'The Committed'

Rose and Crooners - Community choir every Monday 7pm - 8.30pm

Post Office - Every Wednesday and Fridays 9.30 - 11.30



Longcot

Chamber Music Concert in St. Mary's Church, Longcot on Saturday 4th October 6pm

Torriano Ensemble. The concert opens with two wonderful works by Mozart, the Overture from the opera *Così fan tutte* and the C Minor Serenade K. 488, alongside Beethoven's charming *Rondino*. The second half includes the Prelude from Humperdink's *Hansel and Gretel*, Malcolm Arnold's British sea shanties and an exuberant Slavonic Dance by Dvorak. Admission is free with a retiring collection in aid of St. Mary's Church and the Longcot Village Trust. Bar open at 5.30 pm and at the interval. All seats should be reserved in advance by emailing victorialmedcalf@gmail.com

CHURCH MATTERS
OCTOBER SERVICES 2025 IN ASHBURY, COMPTON, LONGCOT & FERNHAM
WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

The service times are correct at the time of writing (15 September). For the latest news and information, please download the weekly Newsletter from our website.

Sunday 5 October	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
HARVEST	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 12 October	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) (Harvest)	Compton
	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 19 October	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	3 rd Sunday Service	Ashbury
Sunday 26 October	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	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*

Ashbury prayer cycle for October: 5th Odstone Farm & Cottages, 12th Pound Piece, 19th Station Road, 26th Malthouse.

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.

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!

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), or Rev'd Dr Janet Anderson-MacKenzie (associate vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07821 474 711

'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



Cinnabar caterpillar and adult moth

At this season the romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821 is remembered for his poem Autumn and the first two lines "The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness; close bosom friend of the maturing sun". He died so young of the family disease tuberculosis for which at that time there was no cure.

This year everyone I know is reporting an extravaganza of laden fruit. In our Bishopstone garden we have a large and ancient perry pear tree. Looking for someone to harvest the crop we have found a company from West Lavington who tell us perry pears are becoming increasingly rare and they seem interested. He plans to lay a tarpaulin and shake and poke them down. Everyone has apples. In our garden our young bramley tree, the best cooking variety, has a big lean caused by too much fruit. We should have removed many more apples much earlier and those remaining

would have developed to greater size. At the farm we have eating apples that are very sweet. The blackberries we have picked, some with grandchildren's help, will go nicely to make offerings of blackberry and apple pie this winter. Colourful garden ornamental and hedgerow crab apples are equally laden.

Its early to be thinking of Christmas festivities. The blackthorn bears an abundance of sloes; if you are thinking of making sloe gin. You do not have to go far and a spell in the fridge to mirror the frost effect might be a good plan with our milder winters. But historically much autumn fruit was said to be the portent of a hard winter to come. If the birds don't take them holly is also full of berries. I am also noticing a carpet of fallen acorns under the oaks. The practice of pannage still survives in a few places where pigs are allowed to harvest this free bounty.

Back in August before the weather broke, we felt motivated to do something about the increasing tide of yellow invading some of our permanent pastures. The Injurious Weed Act 1959 lists ragwort, curled and broad leaved dock and spear and creeping thistle as species needing control under the law. With help and a fork to lift the root we did a fair job clearing fields of ragwort that we rent from the National Trust at Ashdown Park. In doing this task I noticed the pretty cinnabar moth caterpillars feeding on the ragwort florets. Our Russley Downs were also topped with cattle moved because of the danger of ragwort poisoning. Time will tell if any reduction follows. For some reason that I do not understand mature sheep can graze ragwort safely simultaneously performing fair control of this biennial.

Richard Green



Cinnabar caterpillar and adult moth

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 Mabhunnu

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

or Rev'd Dr Janet Anderson-MacKenzie (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:

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 November '25. Submit your entries for **November by 22 October** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionlturner@me.com 01793 710302 see also www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.

All views expressed are those of the contributors.