

VOL XXXXVIII NO 2

APRIL/MAY 2021

ASTON ROWANT, KINGSTON BLOUNT & CROWELL

PARISH NOTES



Carol Cross

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All day hire – 8am to midnight

Resident £210; Non Resident £225

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Resident £85; Non Resident £90

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To make a booking, email bookings@kbvh.org, phone 07391 139707 or visit our website www.kbvh.org where you will also find a full description of the facilities we can offer plus details of activities currently taking place in the hall.



KINGSTON BLOUNT VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall, in common with many community halls across the country, has been closed to public bookings since the first lockdown began over a year ago. We are pleased to announce that the Hall will finally reopen on 21 June, assuming that the restrictions are eased according to the timetable published by the Government. The regulations governing the operation of village halls have been very restrictive and have prevented us from reopening any earlier. It is likely that there will be additional conditions that hirers will need to agree to as part of the booking process but it is not clear what this will be at this point in time. We hope to provide more details in the June edition of the Parish Notes.

Andrea Tinson

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

CAB Local office www.adviceguide.org.uk	01844 214827
Chinnor Village Centre	01844 353733
Church Tower, Aston Rowant: R Newton	01844 352926
Dial-a-ride (for people with mobility problems)	01869 327048
Highways Pothole Hotline	0845 3101111
Highways Street Light Hotline	0800 317802
Library-Chinnor	01844 351721
Oil Syndicate adam.bernstein@mac.com .	01844 350440
Oxon County Council www.oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 792422
Police-Thame (Thames Valley)	101 or 999
Poor's Hillock Allotments: Rupert Wolstenholme Rupert.wolstenholme@btinternet.com	07866 302697
Porch: S Thompson	01844 351334
Porch: J Rooksby	01844 352320
Post office-Chinnor	01844 351214
Schools:	
Aston Rowant C of E School	01844 351671
Icknield Community College Watlington	01491 612691
Lord Williams School Thame	01844 210510
Mill Lane School Chinnor	01844 352106
St Andrew's C of E, Chinnor	01844 351353
SODC Main Customer Services	01235 422422
SODC Refuse/Recycling	03000 610610
SODC Planning	01235 422600
Reporting Fly-tipping	03000 610610
SODC Environmental Department	01235 422403
Village Hall Hire/Bookings: Andrea Tinson	07391 139707

PARISH COUNCIL & LOCAL CONTACTS

Parish Website

www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Clerk

Tracy Lambourne

clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

01844 353989

07971039612

Parish Councillors:

Chairman Peter Tinson, Kingston Blount

peter.tinson@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

01844 352817

Councillor Matthew Day, Kingston Blount

matthew.day@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

07940752446

Councillor Steven Sowerby, Kingston Blount

steven.sowerby@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

01844 351392

Councillor Trelawney Hill, Aston Rowant

trelawney.hill@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

01844 353051

Councillor Adam Bernstein, Aston Rowant

adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

07785 905120

Councillor Matthew Priestley, Kingston Blount

matthew.priestley@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

07976 373512

Councillor John Wyatt, Aston Rowant

john.wyatt@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

07710 232349

District Councillors:

Lynn Lloyd

01844 354313

lynn.lloyd@southoxon.gov.uk

Ian White

01844 352085

ian.white@southoxon.gov.uk

County Councillor

Jeannette Matelot

jeannette.matelot@oxfordshire.gov.uk

MP

John Howell

01491 612852

howelljm@parliament.uk

Police Community Support Office

tel: 101

ThameHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Village Hall Hire/Bookings

Andrea Tinson

07391 139707

bookings@kbvh.org

Play Area

Tracy Lambourne

01844 353989

clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

Aston Rowant Cricket Club Chairman

Simon Tremlin

07780 672552

LETTER FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

I hope that the hint of Spring and the progress that we are making nationally to emerge from the restrictions that the pandemic has forced upon us bring a note of optimism to many. I say that knowing the wide range of difficulties that the prolonged lockdown has brought for many people which we will need to work through together in the coming months and years.

Last month I mentioned new legislation coming forward to help protect our communities from illegal encampments. Mindful of concerns to cut crime and build safer communities, the Government has now laid the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill before Parliament. This Bill seeks to ensure that the police have the powers and tools they need to protect themselves and the public. It also looks to overhaul sentencing laws.

I know that Climate Change is an issue dear to many hearts. Whilst there are many big things that Government can do and is doing, I have often said that there are also many things that we as individuals and households can do that will also make a significant difference. The recent Food Waste Action Week, led by the Waste and Resource Action Programme and supported by Defra, focussed on one such issue. Some of the data produced to support this campaign is very revealing as indeed is the impact that we can make if we all try to reduce our waste. For more information on this do go to the WRAP website. Also on the subject of the environment there is also good news from the Department of Transport on the planned introduction of a new blend of petrol for cars and motor bikes which will help reduce harmful emissions. This is not to discourage the move towards electric vehicles but E10 fuel will mean greener fuel available to help reduce emissions from millions of vehicles already on our roads.

Many of our communities have completed, or are working on, Neighbourhood Plans. I continue to lobby Government where there are concerns related to these. I know that there have been concerns over the work involved in producing a plan, especially in smaller communities. I was therefore pleased this month to see some new funding come forward to pilot a simpler approach. The aim of this pilot is to test a simpler approach which aims to overcome the perceived complexity of the process and lack of volunteer capacity that can often result in low uptake for producing a plan despite a strong appetite in the local community to shape their areas.

I hope that Parliament will soon return to a more normal pattern of working but in the meantime the work continues albeit largely remotely. If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

John Howell MP

LOCAL CHURCH CONTACTS

Rector to the United Parish

The Rev'd Dr. Jacky Barr
The Rectory, Chinnor OX39 4DH
01844 352027 07769 825 305
revd.jackybarr@gmail.com

Parish Administrator

Tricia Prescott csarc@btinternet.com
Chinnor Church Office, OX39 4PG 01844 352472

Associate Clergy:

Aston Rowant

The Rev'd Des Foote 01844 355945
The Rev'd Dr. Brian Griffiths 01844 355953

Crowell

To be appointed

Churchwardens

Aston Rowant: Richard Boarder 07795 681263, Jeremy Wilcock 01844 761119
Crowell: Maggie & Andy Warman 01844 351909

PCC Treasurer

Michael DeVal 12 Oakley Road, Chinnor OX39 4HB 07807 967452

For arrangements for Baptism,
Confirmation and Marriage
please contact the Parish
Administrator (see above).

Methodist Services – Station
Road, Chinnor



CROWELL CHURCH

When services are permitted again we will be in summertime and so the services will be Evening Prayer at 6pm on the 1st Sunday of each month and Evening Prayer with Eucharist at 6pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Fortunately, we are still able to use the churches for recording and/or transmitting services.

We can still offer access for private prayer. This is by appointment with the Wardens who are very flexible.

A Sunday service will still be broadcast on the church website as will the Diocese service on their website. This will support those who will not feel comfortable in joining an attended service. Should you wish to attend a virtual service, then go to chinnorunitedchurches.co.uk or oxford.anglican.org respectively.

If anyone would like an e-copy of the monthly Chinnor Parish Magazine and/or the weekly Chinnor on-line service booklet then please e-mail the parish admin office at csarc@btinternet.com

The porch light has been deliberately left on to assist those using the footpath and lighting the porch. We are looking to replace the solar footpath lights which have served a useful life but are now failing. Anyone wishing to sponsor these should contact the Wardens.

Spring has sprung in the graveyard and some of the graves are full of colour.

We will remain part of the Chinnor Churches Go Wild programme and so parts of the graveyard will be left to grow into wildlife areas as in previous years. We had some good results last year, finding rare grasses and flowers. The graveyard also hosted a variety of birds nests which we hope will return this year.

We have installed wildlife mats which have become homes for slow worms, grass snakes, frogs and toads (see page 21 for more information). We have a hedgehog box to install. Hopefully this will attract a family to breed later this year and to then hibernate next winter.

Sadly, we have to report the passing of one of our organists and previous choir mistress, Rosemary Keavy on 12 March.

Please stay safe and please, please obey the rules.

Andy & Maggs Warman

(Church Wardens) 07557 476443

EASTER SUNDAY

Aston Rowant church wardens are pleased to announce that, unless something unexpected happens, we will be open for worship on Easter Sunday at 9.30am. The service will be run under COVID SECURE conditions. Please check the website (www.chinnorunitedchurches.co.uk) or contact the Churchwardens to confirm.

Richard Boarder and Jeremy Wilcock

ChurchWardens

PASTORAL LETTER

As I write this letter we are moving into the season of Lent, a time of repentance and self-denial. It is a re-enactment of Jesus' stay in the wilderness. Some years ago an article in the Church Times written by Laurie Vere offered me a new perspective on Lent.

He suggests that the wilderness was a place for solitude, rest and a profound trust in God to meet every need – emotional, physical, spiritual and mental. It involved an acceptance of risk – with the dangers of isolation (loneliness, self-deception and hunger) for the sake of a closer walk with God.

Living through yet another lockdown makes me feel we are facing such a desert experience. It somehow seems harder this time around. We don't have the adrenalin of facing the challenge of a new crisis but feel only a tired drudgery that we didn't necessarily feel the first time around. Unable to meet with others to pursue our normal activities and work, we face our desert experience alone.

Lent comes as a timely reminder that Jesus has gone before us and is with us. As we get up very early in the morning, we hear the dawn chorus starting up outside - in what looks like pitch darkness "but the birds sense sunrise." (Amy Scott Robinson)

AN INVOCATION FOR LENT

Into the dark world
a snowdrop comes,
a blessing of hope and peace
carrying within it a green heart:
symbol of God's renewing love.
Come to inhabit our darkness, Lord Christ,
for dark and light are alike to you.
May nature's white candles of hope
remind us of your birth
and lighten our journey
through Lent and beyond.

Kate McIlhagga

Joan DeVal



CHINNOR CHURCHES GO WILD! TALK

On Tuesday 16th February, Chinnor Churches Go Wild! and I hosted an online talk about the wildlife in the churchyards of Chinnor United Churches, and the work that the volunteers from the group are doing to help look after it. It is available to watch on the Chilterns Conservation Board youtube channel here <https://youtu.be/KC9dXVSrL3o>

The talk described how churchyards are very special places that we share with wildlife. They are often places in the landscape that are the least disturbed by impacts such as building, agriculture and high numbers of people passing through. This means that churchyards can be refuges for many creatures, as well as having a very diverse range of plants in them. More than 600 species of lichen have been found in churchyards in lowland England, growing on the different stone found in churchyards. Lichens are really good indicators of air quality – if there are many different kinds growing, then the air quality is probably quite good.

Using examples from the local churchyards, I talked about the importance of the plants in churchyards, including flowers and grasses, and the old trees that grow there. Yew trees in particular are a feature of British churchyards – the longest lived trees in these islands – making the UK internationally important for ‘veteran’ yew trees. Both Aston Rowant and Sysdenham have some lovely old yew and box in them.

Short grass is important for keeping the churchyard tidy and it is important for wildlife too. Birds such as thrushes and wagtails usually feed from areas of short grass for example. However, if it’s possible to have some areas where the grass and flowers can grow longer, this is really helpful for butterflies, grasshoppers, ground-nesting birds and small mammals to shelter and feed in.

We also talked about timing of clear-ups in the churchyards, and while there are always jobs to do throughout the year, it’s a good idea to let everything grow in peace through April and May, where appropriate. If some grass cutting can be halted for at least 6 weeks, this gives a good opportunity for plants to flower and set seed, for butterflies to lay eggs and caterpillars to develop and for pollinators to do their work. Any work on trees, shrubs and hedges should stop between mid February and the end of August to leave nesting birds undisturbed.

The small changes made through the efforts of Chinnor Churches Go Wild! and the volunteers who look after the churchyards means we’ve been able to count over 20 species of flowering plants and grasses in Crowell churchyard, 30 bird species across the churches, to discover grass snakes and slow worms under survey mats, and to improve feeding habitat for swifts and bats at the churches. Hedgehog and bird boxes, and insect hotels at several churches have also increased the space for nature in Chinnor churchyards.

Of course, there are many more things we can do for wildlife. Hopefully we gave an overview of how simple it can be to help churchyard wildlife in our short talk.

Katie Horgan

Rough Around the Edges Project officer for Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, as part of the Chalk Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme.
katiehorgan@bbowt.org.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Neighbourhood Plans have, understandably, taken something of a back seat during other crises. Ours was delayed, first by the initial lockdown, which extended the consultation period from six weeks to four months; then by the difficulties involved in collating and resolving the 120+ local and external submissions that were received, and lastly by the absence of public meetings to finish the job. Behind the scenes, some of this has taken place, and a timetable has, again, been provisionally set to complete the pre-submission consultation process. We are aiming for an update meeting, via Zoom, on 13 April, to be followed by a final meeting on 11 May, prior to the handover of the Plan to the Parish Council, which commissioned it. There would then probably need to be a legal sign-off, after the Parish Council's meeting in May, and, at long last, the Parish can take ownership of the document. From here it goes to SODC, and the district council take on responsibility for its examination and, all being well, a local referendum. Who would have thought it would take this long? Certainly not me.

Mark Thackeray

Chairman – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

SPEED AWARENESS

You will all, no doubt, have been aware of a gradual increase in the speed of traffic passing through Aston Rowant on the B4009, and on the roads within the village itself, with many drivers regularly exceeding the statutory limit. Your parish council has recognised that traffic calming action must be taken and, together with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), are now addressing this problem head-on with proposals that are intended to make our roads safer for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic alike.

Following Cllr. Matthew Day's successful installation of a chicane at the southern approach to Kingston Blount, it's now Aston Rowant's turn to control traffic speeds.

The council's traffic calming project for Aston Rowant will include (a) reducing the speed limit within the old village roads from 30 MPH to 20 MPH, and (b) feasibility studies to install traffic speed reduction measures along the main highway, especially at the junction of the old village road and the B4009. OCC have also recognised that the current electronic Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the B4009 south-eastern entrance to the village, is badly positioned. It triggers a "30 MPH Slow Down" warning prematurely for traffic arriving from the motorway and therefore will be relocated further north to become more effective.

The speed limit change within Aston Rowant will be implemented this spring, so may I suggest that now is an opportunity for everyone to practice observing the coming 20 MPH limit while waiting for replacement signage.

We trust our efforts will create a safer environment for all.

Cllr. John Wyatt

Aston Rowant Parish Council Traffic Calming Coordinator.

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

One of the challenges of living in a rural community is that the technical infrastructure is of a lesser quality than that found in more urban areas. A weak mobile phone signal is one example; poor or slow internet connectivity is another. Some residents have reported that their internet connections do not have the capacity to support multiple activities such as a Zoom meeting and web access.

Although the parish does enjoy high capacity broadband connectivity to the telecoms cabinets within the parish, the connections to individual homes and businesses are normally made over copper wires. In these instances, the speed of internet connection is dependent on the distance of the property from the main telecoms cabinet; the further you are from the cabinet, the slower your internet connection will be. Also, in the future, any failed copper wiring is likely to be replaced by aluminium which is not as effective. One way of improving internet connectivity is to replace the copper wiring with fibre internet direct to premises. There are a number of initiatives that are seeking to deliver this in rural areas including 'Better Broadband' which is run by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Parish Council has been facilitating discussions with two of the potential providers of fibre connectivity to the area – Airband and BT Openreach. Both companies have indicated that the roll out of fibre connections to premises in the area are long term projects, although some may benefit from other projects that are underway. The first step is to ensure that we have enough interest in the area to merit projects being initiated. Airband have asked for householders/business owners to contact them directly to express interest. Openreach are taking a different approach and have asked for a single point of contact to collate responses for an area so if you would like to express interest in Openreach fibre provision, please email Adam Bernstein at adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk. A strong level of interest may also allow the Parish Council to access funds which could subsidise development.

Finally (and hopefully this is the last time I will need to write this), a reminder that the Parish Council established a network of volunteers to assist others during the current restrictions. Their contact details are on page 44

Peter Tinson

Chairman – Aston Rowant Parish Council



ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Parish Council meetings were held on Wednesday 10th of February 2021 and Wednesday 10th March 2021 where the applications detailed below were discussed. The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 14th of April and until COVID19 restrictions are fully lifted, we will continue to meet virtually via ZOOM.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

P20/S4894/FUL Double garage & associated works at Hill Cottage High Street Kingston Blount OX39 4SJ. After 2 site visits & assurances over retention of open plan style replacement fence on Mutton Lane, **FULLY SUPPORT**

P21/S0381/T28 Development work by BT Open Reach (Installation of 1 x 10m pole) at: The Green/Plowden Park, Aston Rowant. The council spoke to BT Openreach - not keen on 10m pole on the Green - verbal agreement to place workings underground.

P21/S0383/T28 Development work by BT Open Reach (Installation of 1 x 10m pole) at: School House, School Lane, Aston Rowant. If the above can be underground, so should this. **OBJECTION** to both, unless placing workings underground is made a condition of approval.

P20/S3679/FUL Amendment (no. 2) for development work on Land adjacent to Queens Gate Bungalow, Butts Way, Aston Rowant. No further comment from SODC Tree Officer. **CONTINUED OBJECTION.**

P21/S0146/HH Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, internal and external alterations and swimming pool plus new entrance gates and boundary wall at Wych Elm Chinnor Road Aston Rowant. Happy with extensions, but 2.5m wall & gates too tall and out of keeping with rest of the road. **OBJECTION.**

P21/S0523/HH Side extension to form new garage, relocation of fuel tank, extension of driveway paving at Maple House, Aston Rowant Road, Aston Rowant.

FULLY SUPPORT

P21/S0652/HH Demolition & reconstruction of existing front porch at 2 Stert Road, Kingston Blount. **FULLY SUPPORT**

WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS:

None

PLANNING DECISIONS OF SODC:

P20/S4339/HH Proposed 1.5 storey pitched roof extension at Tantivy Cottage Park Lane Kingston Blount. **GRANTED**

P20/S4330/LDE Use of the land for domestic purposes ancillary to Orchard House, High St, KB. Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development. **GRANTED.**

P20/S4366/HH Installation of two windows at 6 Dashwood Court, AR. **REFUSED**

P20/S4547/HH Erection of a greenhouse at Hesters Barn, High St, KB. **APPROVED**

P20/S4894/FUL Double garage and associated works at Hill Cottage, KB. **APPROVED**

PLANNING DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING:

None

PLANNING INSPECTORATE APPEAL:

P20/S1180/FUL (Appeal Reference APP/Q3115/W/20/3263533) - appeal against refusal of planning permission at 18 Church Lane, Aston Rowant by Leo Homes. Representations direct to the Planning Inspectorate by 19th March 2021. We continue to maintain our **OBJECTION** and will respond accordingly.

Please note that all Planning Applications for the Parish can be found on the Parish Council Website: <http://www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk> under 'Parish Council' and then 'Planning'.

All past minutes of Aston Rowant Parish Council (Including the Annual Parish Meeting) can be found under: <http://www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk> under 'Parish Council' and then 'Meetings'.

Occasional updates concerning the Parish are added to the Parish Council's website and Facebook pages as well as the Kingston Blount/Aston Rowant (KBAR) Facebook page.

Tracy Lambourne

Clerk to Aston Rowant Parish Council



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URGENT REPAIR TO ASTON ROWANT CHURCH

Help us to maintain the heritage of the village; our lovely church is nearly 1000 years old. Please help us to save it for the next 1000 years.

We need about £50,000 and so we shall be asking for funds from large donors as well as the local villagers. If the heritage of the Parish is important to you please make a donation to this work.

The work includes repairs to:-

- Stone work, a specialist job using traditional materials such as lime mortars, the work being done by skilled stone masons
- Window frames, supporting ancient glass work
- Drainage systems
- Cast iron gutter work
- Sealing of damp areas



Donations can be made:

Direct to our bank account

Account No. 00019680

Sort Code 40-52-40

Please mark "Aston Repairs"

By cheque made out to:

United Parish of Chinnor.

Please put "Aston Repairs" on the back of the cheque.

Or by Just Giving – www.justgiving.com/unitedparish-chinnor

Mention "Aston Repairs" please.

Please send cheques and gift aid declarations to:-

Richard Boarder 5 Aston Park, Aston Rowant OX49 5SW

07795 681263

Gift Aid Declaration Aston Rowant Church Repairs

(The church will claim from HMRC 25p for every £1 you donate)

Full name _____

Home address _____

Post Code _____

Date _____

I wish Gift Aid to apply to present and future donations. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount claimed on my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

I have read and understand the Gift Aid Declaration.

Signature _____

ARPC FOOTPATH AND AMENITIES GROUP

It seems that at long last Spring is almost here, the snowdrops, daffodils and the start of the blossom always give me (and I know plenty of others) such a lift. In this most depressing of winters, it has been such a comfort.

Please go and enjoy the walks, I appreciate that Fiveways [see page 18] is covered elsewhere, but if you only go for one walk, I strongly recommend Fiveways at this time of year.

In terms of recent tasks, we have cut back the hedges leading to the village hall, removed the elder and brambles from the footpath to the Old Shoulder of Mutton and hopefully cleared the gully in the middle of Church Lane. My thanks to George Stevens for all his work.

We are pleased to announce that the Parish Walk will take place on Sunday 27 June at 10.00am. If you've not taken part in one of these please feel free to book and join us. The scenery in the Chilterns is memorable.

Please meet in Lewknor. Park roadside in the village on the left side of the road near the Leathern Bottel. Please do not park on the pub forecourt. A 5.5m circular walk at a moderate pace. Hill Road, Ridgeway, Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, Bald Hill, Cowleaze Wood, Wormsley Estate, Linkey Down before returning to Lewknor by 13.00. Please bring a snack and water. The walk will comply with Covid rules as they apply at the time. Boots or walking shoes please. Booking is essential please. Book a place by phoning 07767 647714. This walk is organised by Aston Rowant Parish Council Footpath and Amenities Group.

I would also like to remind parishioners of the booklet 'Walks at the Foot of the Chilterns' which includes 4 walks in and around the parish including the Aston Rowant Discovery Trail. If you are new to the parish each new household is eligible for a free copy; please contact Peter Hetherington on the same number as the Parish Walk. If you want a replacement the cost is £3.

Hopefully we as a committee will be able to meet in person later this spring. We are always looking for new projects to enhance the parish. If you have any specific ideas please contact me.

Finally, may I ask all the cyclists of the parish to be considerate to walkers, particularly on the footpaths. We are not anti-cyclists, rather the opposite, anything that encourages people to get out is welcome. But a very small minority are causing upset to parishioners, so please be courteous.



Steven Sowerby

Group Chairman and Footpath Warden, Aston Rowant Parish
steven.sowerby@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk
01844 351392

NEWS FROM FIVEWAYS

Having been given the opportunity to take on a ‘special guest editor’ role for this edition of Notes from Fiveways, I’ve decided that it might be fun to get back to basics. So consider this a spotters’ guide to some of the things you and your family can look out for during the Spring. So let’s get straight into the detail...



Grips

Grips are small shallow trenches, normally dug by hand, which are created to take surface water from a path into a ditch or soakaway. How many can you see as you walk down Church Lane?

Culverts

A culvert is a structure that allows water to flow under a road or trail. Typically, they’re made from pipes or other material. How many culverts can you spot around Fiveways?



The Dog Pool!

For reasons not entirely clear to me, this little spot, recently cleared out for pooch enjoyment, is known as The Dog Pool... Lifeguards aren’t on duty, so doggies enter at their own risk! For the super techies amongst you, The Dog Pool is What3words location – [revolts.detained.otter!](#)



Snowdrops

Originally believed to be native to the UK, this perennial (meaning comes back every year) is actually native to Europe and the Middle East, and was brought to Britain by the Romans. They were named Snowdrops by a Swedish botanist who named them “the milk flower of the snow”.



Pink Cyclamen

Cyclamens are part of the Primulaceae family and, in many languages, are known as “Swinebreads” as they are believed to be a favourite food of the pig. Typically they come up in the autumn, grow through the winter and die off in the Spring – so you’ll need to look hard to find them at this time of year!



Green Alkanet

The Green Alkanet loves Fiveways due to its damp, shady environment. Green Alkanet is a member of the forget-me-not family and loves Alkaline soil, of which we have plenty in Aston Rowant. It flowers April until June and is loved by bees and bumblebees.



Wood Anemones

The Wood Anemone is one of the first flowers to bloom in Spring. They love old and ancient woodlands that suit their slow growth. Anemones are named after the Greek God Anemos, who sent the flowers ahead of him in the Spring. They can be spotted at Fiveways just past the daffodils! How many of these can you spot through the Spring?

Looking forward to sharing what can be seen during the Summer months next time!

STOP PRESS!

Much excitement at Fiveways this Spring as video that we thought were of water vole are actually of water shrew. The water shrew is a species of conservation concern, and an indicator species of good water quality, because they are very vulnerable to pollutants (including pesticides), drainage schemes and bank clearance. They're also never very abundant and considered difficult to monitor, so we've done well to 'capture' this individual on film.

To view our water shrew(s) on camera (in the, seemingly already popular dog pool) please visit our the Fiveways section on the Parish Council website www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk/fiveways-corner/

James Lee

CHINNOR CHURCHES GOES WILD!

SLOW WORMS

Chinnor Churches goes Wild! have been given 10 slow worm mats as part of the Chalk, Cherries & Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme. The mats have been distributed in the four churches of the United Parish as well as the Chinnor Methodist Church.

The slow worm is neither a worm nor a snake, but is, in fact, a legless lizard - its identity is given away by its abilities to shed its tail and blink with its eyelids. It is much smaller than a snake and has smooth, golden-grey skin. Males are paler in colour and sometimes sport blue spots, while females are larger, with dark sides and a dark stripe down the back.

Slow worms can be found in heathland, tussocky grassland, woodland edges and rides where they can find invertebrates to eat and a sunny patch in which to sunbathe. They are often found in mature gardens and allotments, where they like hunting around the compost heap. However, if you have a cat, you are unlikely to find them in your garden as cats predate them. Like other reptiles, slow worms hibernate, usually from October to March.

The mating season for slow worms kicks off in May and males become aggressive towards each other. During courtship, the male takes hold of the female by biting her head or neck, and they intertwine their bodies. Courtship may last for as long as 10 hours! Females incubate the eggs internally, 'giving birth' to an average of eight young in summer.

Slow worms, like other reptiles and amphibians, need places to warm up and gather energy. If you have log or rock piles, small sheets of roofing felt or corrugated iron, these work really well as hiding places for slow worms. They also create spaces for invertebrates to live, providing food for any slow worms – or frogs and toads, that might be in your garden.



LETTER FROM A HEADTEACHER

In March we welcomed the children back to school after the second full lockdown for schools. To support their transition back, and also nurture the children's wellbeing, we held a Science Week for the first week back. The 'STEM qualities', which are the characteristics that have been identified in people who are successful at Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, closely match the key skills that we aim to develop in all our children and during the week we focused on using imagination, collaboration, commitment, resilience, patience, and tenacity.

The eldest children in the school were inspired by the problem of generating clean, sustainable energy in remote locations and the children became real 'innovators for the future'. They were challenged to design and build a wind turbine which would be capable of picking up a cup of weights, using only the power of wind. Our lower Key Stage 2 pupils made paper gliders from a single paper straw and a couple of strips of paper and also made magnet mazes using a cereal box and their knowledge of magnetism.

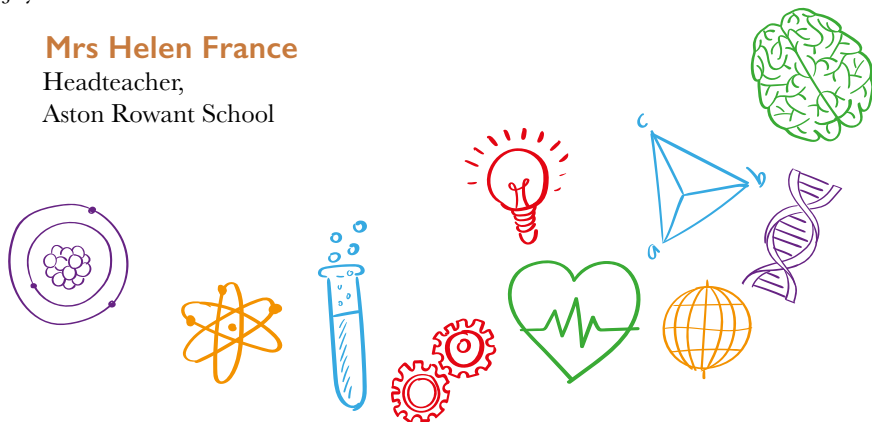
Our KS1 children used playdough to represent the parts of a flower that they found in the playground. They then tested who could build the tallest tower to the moon using straws and blue tack, and investigated how to avoid it looking like the leaning tower of Pisa! Finally, they learnt about chromatography and how a single felt tip pen has many pigments in.

In Reception class we introduced a 'Curiosity Cube' where the children had to guess what the object was inside the curiosity cube, making observations and asking lots of wonderful questions. They then investigated materials and their relative strengths and tested this out by making bridges that would hold a KG weight. Finally, they looked at different seeds and predicted what they will grow into!

Our Science Week was a celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and encouraged our children to think about everyday discoveries and how they affect their lives by exploring Science in the world around us. Equally importantly the school was once again full of young people having fun and learning together. It was a joy to behold!

Mrs Helen France

Headteacher,
Aston Rowant School



ASTON ROWANT SCHOOL HOUSE EDUCATIONAL TRUST

This charity was set up after the sale of The School House that sits between the two separate parts of the school in February 1991.

The Trust Deed was drawn up and trustees were nominated.

The proceeds from the sale were invested and the income was applied to:

- In or towards promoting the education of pupils attending the Aston Rowant Church of England School, or
- In or towards promoting the education (including social and physical training) of persons under the age of 25 years who have at any time attended the said school or are resident in the Parish of Aston Rowant.

Some residents in the parish may either have children or are themselves eligible to obtain a grant. To be considered you need to apply in writing to the Trustees who will consider applications at their meeting in May. Each application will be considered on merit.

For details or to apply, contact the administrator:

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PARISHIONER OF THE YEAR 2021

After the extraordinary year we have all been through, your Parish Council have decided to recognise that many parishioners and small business owners have gone over and above the normal and have greatly assisted locals in many ways.

We have decided to instigate an award to recognise these achievements, with 2 age groups, under 18 and over 18, with a nominal £50 prize for each category.

If you wish to nominate a person or a business who you think have given an exceptional level of service in the past year, please complete the details below and return to the Parish Clerk by 30/April: clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk or paper copy to The Cottage, High Street, KB.

PARISHIONER OF THE YEAR - 2021
Name of person nominated
Name of business nominated (if applicable)
Age group
Reason for nomination
Nominated by (leave blank if you wish to remain anonymous)

LITTER PICKER VACANCY



Are you keen to keep our community looking it's best, while earning some pocket money?

Aston Rowant Parish Council are seeking a litter picker to help keep our parish clean and tidy. This would be for a maximum of 4 hours per month in and around the parish, excluding the B4009, Kingston Stort Road and Kingston Hill.

Rate of pay £6.33 per hour

(National minimum wage for under 18's is currently £4.35 p/h)

- Minimum age 13
- Work permit required (the Parish Council will arrange)
- All equipment will be provided

Please send a letter of application to: Tracy Lambourne, Parish Clerk, The Cottage, High Street, Kingston Blount, Oxon, OX39 4SJ.

RESPECT THE CHILTERN'S COUNTRYSIDE

I. KEEP DOGS ON LEADS



With the lambing season underway, conservation groups, farmers and The Kennel Club are reminding dog owners to keep dogs under control at all times, and to always keep them on a lead around livestock.

And as birds begin to nest and rear young, walkers and countryside users can help protect

ground nesting birds and other wildlife by keeping to footpaths and bridleways.

At this time of year, there are signs of Spring in the air, with birds starting to nest, the first few butterflies on the wing and lambs being born. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape, but also a living, working landscape where livestock grazing in the fields are a regular sight at this time of year.

We are fortunate to have over 2,000 km of footpaths in the Chilterns AONB and, inevitably, many of them pass through fields of sheep or cows. This is a timeless rural scene, but, sadly, one which has seen a sharp increase in incidents of livestock being wounded, or even killed, by dogs which have been let off leads. This is devastating for all involved.

NFU adviser Georgia Craig says: "Most dog attacks on livestock are completely preventable. Please #takethelead and keep your dog on short lead around sheep, particularly now, with ewes about to give birth and so many newborn lambs around. If chased by dogs, pregnant ewes can commonly lose their lambs or die from stress and exhaustion. Most dog owners behave responsibly, but sadly a minority allow their pets to run freely in fields where farm animals may be grazing."

Dog ownership has increased hugely during lockdown, with limited opportunities to socialise and train new puppies. Tim Bamford from the CLA says: "With dog ownership becoming more popular, livestock worrying by dogs not adequately controlled by their owners is on the increase, and it's so important owners take responsibility to keep their dog under control, especially having a dog on a lead around livestock".

The Chilterns Conservation Board's Chief Executive, Dr Elaine King, said "It's great that more people are getting out and enjoying the nature and the beauty of the Chilterns during lockdown. However, we urge people to follow the Countryside Code, to ensure that people, farm animals and wildlife can all stay safe".

2. KEEP TO FOOTPATHS

Leading conservation organisations in the Chilterns have come together with farmers and landowners urging people to keep to paths and to keep their dogs under control when walking in the countryside.

The latest lockdown has coincided with a period of particularly high rainfall making paths extremely wet and muddy. This, combined with far greater numbers of people using their local paths is damaging paths and crops. Paths have widened to several metres across, with people trying to social distance from each other, or seeking drier ground. Some people have abandoned the waymarked paths altogether and followed field edges instead to avoid the worst of the mud. This is damaging field margin habitats which are important for wildlife.

The Chilterns countryside is providing much-needed solace and pleasure for people at a very difficult time. However it is also a farmed landscape with many paths crossing farmers fields. The message from farmers is clear – please keep to the paths!

Georgia Craig at the NFU says, “Mud can’t be avoided at the moment, so your best bet is to put your wellies on and follow the signposted paths. People are welcome on the signposted rights of way but straying off those paths means crops will get trampled, affecting farmers businesses. At this time of year the crops might still be below the surface or look very similar to grass, but walking on them will compact and damage the growing plants”.

Daniel Hares, who farms at Buckmoorend Farm near Wendover, is one of the many Chilterns farmers affected. Walkers widened a path through one of his wheatfields to 10 metres across - the equivalent to losing six tonnes of wheat, enough to make around 9,000 loaves of bread.

Chilterns farmers care for the land which produces our food and many played a vital role during lockdown supplying their local communities with fresh local produce such as the seventh generation Lacey family in Lane End. The land they manage has always been popular with walkers but, like many farmers, they have experienced a big surge in numbers and issues not seen on that scale before.

The Countryside Code sets out some simple guidance to ensure that people can enjoy their visit to the countryside while being safe and respectful of others. See <https://bit.ly/2YfK3dE>

Vicki Pearce

Communications Officer
Chilterns Conservation Board





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GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Each new year it is recommended that parishes review (GDPR) practices and discuss any recommendations the Diocese and the GDPR Office make.

So, for the past year, what has been the main cause of data breaches and what can we learn? Is it failing software or hackers or human errors? The answer is human error by far. According to a survey by one of the leading law firms: ‘the biggest trap people can fall into is to assume that, for some reason or other, the GDPR doesn’t apply to them. Many people incorrectly assume that ‘the GDPR is only for big companies and doesn’t affect me’ or that ‘we run a charity, so we’re fine, right?’ These assumptions are irrelevant. It doesn’t matter how big your organisation is, how much data you collect or what you use it for. The only thing that matters is whether you collect EU residents’ personal data. If you do, you need to either stop collecting it or comply with the GDPR.’

In light of the above, apart from being vigilant that we don’t fall into the trap of human error, it doesn’t seem as if there is anything we need to do this year to update our procedures and policies.

Just as a reminder, I include the table of do’s and don’ts I included in my last report. I’ve culled them from a variety of sources. I hope they are helpful:

DO

- Remind oneself of the responsibility of data privacy requirements.
- Be vigilant with emails and especially related things like attachments.
- Adopt a policy of preferentially using bcc.
- Regularly audit the data you are using.
- Check with individuals before handing over data.
- Report any data breach.
- Make sure all your electronic data is password protected
- Make sure that all your paper data has at least one lock between it and the outside world.
- Shred paper information, don’t just put it in a bin.

DON'T

- Treat GDPR as just a series of ‘tick-boxes’
- Open emails and things like attachments without being sure of their validity.
- Log on to public wi-fi when processing data.
- Grant others access to data you hold unless they give their permission.
- Use the same password across platforms.
- Reveal passwords to third parties.
- Leave physical keys to data cupboards in easy access or sight.
- Write any comments that you would not be able to defend if challenged.
- Send sensitive information on removable media.



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NEWS FROM ARCC

These notes are based on the Covid information we have at the time of writing, but please do not assume they will remain unchanged. We will try to update via our web site www.astonrowantcc.com and KBar so please keep your eyes open.

The really good news is that we will have a full season of senior cricket with all four teams starting on the 8th May, with the 1st and 4th teams at home to Henley 1st team and Stokenchurch 2nd team respectively. This will be a great opener to the season with the 2019 champions and one of the traditionally strong teams as visitors.

The first competitive game will be on Sunday 18th April when we will host Cumnor in the Village Knock Out cup. This will be probably on the bottom field for reasons I'll explain shortly. After this we will be playing friendly warm up matches on the Saturdays prior to the start of the league season. Junior and senior practices will start on the 16th of April and then continue onwards.

Off the field the plan is to open the bar on Friday 16th April and then on match days until the 8th May. After this we will open Thursday and Friday evenings and during matches on both Saturday and Sunday. We have arranged games for all the Sundays this season.

The exact rules for the bar opening have not yet been finalised, but what we do know is that it will be table service only, the pavilion will remain closed, it will be card only and we will have outdoor seating. Final details when we have them.

We have also introduced a new administration system for all club members, both renewals and new members. If you go onto the website and look at the 'Become a Member' tab and just follow the instructions. We are keen to streamline our administration and the web site can be used for all types of playing members, social membership, also 1881 club and 200 club members. You can still pay by cheque or BACS but we are hoping as many people will change to the new method.

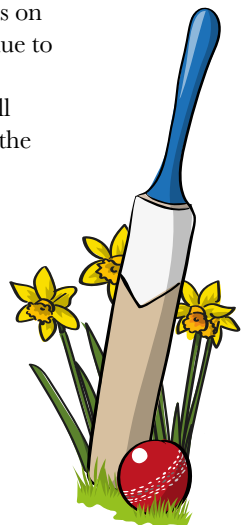
Before the start of the season, we are hoping to upgrade the nets on the ground to improve this facility, but can we remind people that due to ECB regulations they are for members only.

Finally, I referred to the fact that the first game of the season will probably be on the bottom field. The extremely wet winter has left the top field with some problems both on the square and the outfield. Whilst we do not want to stop people walking around the ground, if you could please keep away from the wet areas near the pavilion and portacabins it would be greatly appreciated.

We roped off the field last weekend for spraying and we will probably have to do this again, so please look out for any notices as you approach the ground.

Please stay safe and we look forward to seeing you over the summer.

Steven Sowerby



MARK LORD, LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Many of you may have met Mark during his doorstep project in 2020 when he photographed the residents of Kingston Blount & Aston Rowant to mark 75 years since VE Day. In all Mark photographed 75 households on their doorsteps during lockdown 1 & last Summer. The images will be on display in the village hall soon. Mark has lived in Aston Rowant for almost ten years & is often seen out with his camera photographing his clients using our lovely local countryside as a backdrop. Book Mark to photograph your family & you will meet at his home in Aston Rowant before walking down towards Fiveways. A relaxed family shoot, the walk helps everyone unwind, interact & Mark will capture some beautiful images which your family will treasure for years to come. After the shoot you will receive a secure online gallery from which you can choose digital files, prints or he also has some stunning wall products to choose from. Portrait shoots from Marks home are £25 or a shoot can be arranged at your family home if you prefer.

Please contact Mark for more information.

info@marklordphotography.co.uk

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LEARN, LAUGH & LOVE LIFE WITH YOUR LOCAL U3A

What's the best resolution you've yet to make this year? If you're new to the area and want to meet people and make new friends, a great way is to join your local U3A. You'll not only widen your social circle, but broaden your mind too.

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is an international organisation that came to Britain in the 1980s: here, it is a registered charity affiliated to the national Third Age Trust. Local branches such as Chinnor & District (founded in 1999) with its outreach to all the surrounding villages including Aston Rowant, Kingston Blount, Kingston Stert, Chalford and Copcourt are self-managed by volunteers. Yet we all embrace the motto 'learn, laugh, live' – which sums up perfectly the U3A ethos of inspiring and educating members in their 'third age' of life, retired or not.

As a newcomer to Chinnor myself, I've been delighted how U3A has opened doors with its wide range of interest and activity groups, many of which have kept going throughout lockdown. Needless to say, this past pandemic year has clipped everyone's social wings, but trust U3A to rise to the challenge.

'U3A is a rewarding way to experience community life here and lockdown has highlighted this,' Janet Erskine, our Chairperson tells me. 'Interest groups have managed to keep meetings afloat virtually and by email and we've found speakers who can present online usually using Zoom. It's in these monthly groups that we can laugh and learn together.'

'Use it or lose it,' the adage goes. And let's face it, by our 'third age' we've built a valuable bank of skills, knowledge and sheer enthusiasm that would be a crime to let slip. So why not pool those vital resources?

Whether your aim is to hone your bridge moves, update your computing skills, share crafting tips, explore the area's wealth of churches, paths, hills and woodlands, mull over that best-selling novel or even unleash your inner author. We currently have around 30 interest groups to keep you stimulated.

'These interest groups keep the grey cells active,' encourages Janet. 'You can maintain a lifelong interest or try something new. If, when you join, you can't find what you need on the list, we'll help you create a new group. It only takes two!'

Since companionship is at the heart of Chinnor & District U3A, in addition to these monthly meetings, there are talks, coffee mornings, outings and visits and short holiday breaks to help you get to know your neighbours and find friends with lots in common.

Now Spring's almost here and the vaccination programme is successfully underway, at last it seems that we will all meet again. Get involved, get inspired and get the most out of life here in Chinnor & District by getting in touch with your local U3A.

You can email memsecchinnoru3a@gmail.com or visit u3asites.org.uk/chinnor or contact Peter Hetherington tel 07767 647714 who lives in Kingston Blount and co-ordinates Chinnor and District U3A Outings and Holidays.

You're so very welcome!

Vicci Bentley



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THE BELLS – THE BELLS!

Thank you to all those who have so generously supported our fund-raising efforts for bell restoration by purchasing honey, preserves, Christmas puds, snowmen and Easter chicks. Several years ago, the Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund, which our little ‘stall’ supports, awarded a substantial grant to Aston Rowant towards the repair of its second bell, so it’s good to give something back.

We have also received some very positive comments about our hand bell ringing, firstly in the garden, then the open garage, which restrictions allowed between lockdowns. Positive comments are always appreciated. Lockdowns themselves have been very frustrating with the only ‘bell’ action being on line – a very unsatisfactory substitute for the real thing!

Only three of our church bells were generally heard on Sundays between lockdowns, with masks and social distancing, and for only 15 minutes at a time. Christmas Day was the exception: with slightly relaxed restrictions on distancing it was a real treat to be able to ring all six. This is the only occasion that a true diatonic scale of church bells has been heard since last March. The sound of church bells rung in changes, or permutations, is quintessentially English; an art which we have ‘exported’ to Wales, Scotland, Ireland, parts of the Commonwealth and the USA. The last time church bells were effectively silenced was from 1940-43, when it was planned to use them as a warning of invasion. Apparently plans were rather vague about who would ring them or who would give the order to begin! After the wartime ban was lifted there was renewed interest in the bells that had been silent for so long. Many recruits were taught and the country has since witnessed over 70 years of development and enthusiasm for this fascinating pastime.

As we (hopefully) emerge from this pandemic over the summer, we anticipate that more people who have missed the sound might be interested in finding out more. Some might work largely from home now and find they even have a little time to spare. We have seen many potential recruits on our walks – sorry we don’t know more of you by name! We don’t know when regulations will allow face-to-face teaching but, when they do, why not come along and give bell ringing a try? Practice night is on Tuesdays. It is so much more than a service to the church and community – it’s the ultimate team activity!

Are you aged between 10 and 70? Can you catch a ball? Can you count from 1 to 6 and back again to 1, five times without stopping?

You do not need to be ‘religious’ or musical, or good at maths, or have great strength (can you push a child on a swing?)

It’s a great skill for family members to learn together.

Tricia and Robert Newton

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FIBRE BROADBAND FROM OPENREACH

In early March the parish council hosted a Zoom meeting with representatives from Oxfordshire County Council and Airband offering updates on where they are in providing fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband.

In summary, the Airband plan is not going to be realised unless more residents express interest and even then, it may not be until the end of 2021 or even 2022. It is possible that Airband may provide FTTP to the parish, but it is by no means certain.

Since that meeting, another option appears to have opened up - Openreach - which used to be part of BT and which provides most of the telecoms infrastructure we all use.

Openreach operates a similar process, called the Community Fibre Partnership. But instead of residents directly expressing interest as they did to Airband, with Openreach, residents provide their name, address and postcode to one point of contact who heads up the local group. Those names are then uploaded to Openreach. The collective list is analysed by Openreach and a plan sent back to the group lead.

It's impossible to know if the plan is viable from Openreach's point of view or what the costs involved will be. But in theory, costs could be met by the government's broadband voucher scheme. In general, a home is worth £1500 towards the connection but a small business is worth £3500. So, it is helpful to also know if a business is being run from the home, even if a residential connection is subsequently taken as it may make the project more viable. It is not necessary to give business details at this point.

To be clear, there is no guarantee that this will get us any closer to having FTTP. However, the parish council has learned that fibre is being run by Openreach to the school imminently and importantly, infrastructure is also being installed as part of the process that could connect homes. Now whether that actually leads to connections is another matter, but if nothing else, Openreach will have soon done a fair chunk of the work.

It should also be pointed out that another benefit of Openreach is that it should be possible for households to choose their internet service provider rather than be tied to Airband (for the first two years).

If you are interested and want your address registered with Openreach, please send your details – name, full postal address and if there's a business run from the property - to adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Note – by supplying your details you will only be expressing interest in an Openreach-run FTTP scheme. There is no commitment at this point in time. But the more interest we have the greater the chance of success. At the time of writing, we have almost doubled the interest that Airband generated.

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CORONAVIRUS LOCAL HELP

Aston Rowant Parish Council has developed a network of volunteers who are willing to help those who need assistance during the current crisis as part of the Emergency Plan. The volunteers can help with:

- Shopping
- Getting medication or prescriptions
- Talking and giving advice or just checking in if you want someone local to talk to

The following have volunteered to be contacts to support fellow parishioners
Aston Rowant:

- Adam Bernstein, The Green - 07785 905120
- Mark Lord, The Green - 01844 351218
- Claire Batten, The Green - 07807 755211
- Erin Wodzinski, The Green – 07921 077697
- Mandy Brine, Plowden Park – 07970 212691/01844 354903
- Sally Lee, Chinnor Road – 07764 429970/01844 354982

Kingston Blount:

- Laura Donald, Pleck Lane - 07778 991422
- Steven Sowerby, Pleck Lane - 07802 814625
- Stephanie Johns, Bakers Piece – 07939 030102
- Clare Taylor, Bakers Piece – 07818 404100
- Matthew Priestley, Brook Street - 07976 373512
- Jo Whitfield, Brook Street - 01844 355263/07785 941023
- Sally Brodermann, Old Croft Close – 01844 350364
- Joe Havenhand-Beal, Park Lane – 07860 849910
- Kate Havenhand-Beal, Park Lane – 07949 587556
- Matthew Day, The Green – 07940 752446
- Caroline and Mike Mousley, The Green – 01844 355838
- Peter Tinson, High Street – 07976 748113
- Rachel Cooper, High Street – 07789 906114
- Tim Gent, Icknield Close - 07488 274157
- Carol Wilson, Icknield Close – 07443 941117

If you would like to volunteer to assist in the scheme, please send your name, phone number(s) and street address to peter.tinson@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk or the Clerk (clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk) or any of the other Councillors.

If you have anything you'd like to see in the next issue please get in touch anytime.

Copy deadline for the June/July issue is 15th May.

Email: sallyparishnotes@gmail.com.