

VOL XXXXX NO 4

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023

ASTON ROWANT, KINGSTON BLOUNT & CROWELL

# PARISH NOTES



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# CONTENTS

KB Village Hall	4
Useful Phone Numbers	5
Parish Council & Local Contacts	6
Letter from John Howell MP	7
Local Church Contacts & Services	8
Crowell Church	9
Aston Rowant Parish Council – Can You Help Us?	11
Aston Rowant Parish Council Notes	13
ARPC Footpath and Amenities Group	15
News from Fiveways	17
Introducing Our New Park	18
News from ARCC	21
Letter from the Headteacher	23
Tessa Wyatt's Countryside Diary	25
Aston Rowant School House Educational Trust	27
St Peter & St Paul's Bat Walk	29
Chinnor Village Centre News	31

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description of the facilities we can offer plus details of activities  
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## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

CAB Local office <a href="http://www.adviceguide.org.uk">www.adviceguide.org.uk</a>	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 <a href="mailto:adam.bernstein@mac.com">adam.bernstein@mac.com</a>	01844 350440
Oxon County Council <a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	01865 792422
Police-Thame (Thames Valley)	101 or 999
Poor's Hillock Allotments: Francesca Musaeus <a href="mailto:francesca.musaeus@hotmail.com">francesca.musaeus@hotmail.com</a>	
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
Chinnor u3a [Chair]	07711 337243
Village Hall Hire/Bookings: Andrea Tinson	<a href="mailto:kbvhall@gmail.com">kbvhall@gmail.com</a>

## PARISH NOTES

Please get in touch if you have anything you think we could feature in future issues of the Parish Notes: If you have a new neighbour, or would like to announce any births, marriages or deaths. Maybe you have an interesting story about the area or someone who lives in the area. It would also be great to feature photos and illustrations – I'm always looking for pictures to add to the pages! All ideas welcome.

If you have anything you'd like to see in the next issue please get in touch.  
**Copy deadline for the October/November issue is 17th September.**  
 Email: [sallyparishnotes@gmail.com](mailto:sallyparishnotes@gmail.com)

# PARISH COUNCIL & LOCAL CONTACTS

## Parish Website

[www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Parish Clerk

Tracy Lambourne

[clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

01844 353989

## Parish Councillors:

Chairman Matthew Day

[matthew.day@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.day@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

07940 752446

Vice Chairman Adam Bernstein

[adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

07785 905120

Councillor Helen Birks

[helen.birks@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:helen.birks@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

07921 840360

Councillor Deborah Chaplin

[deborah.chaplin@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.chaplin@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

01844 354648

Councillor Jason Clark-Hodgson

[jason.clark-hodgson@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:jason.clark-hodgson@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

07901 790749

Councillor Trelawney Hill, Aston Rowant

[trelawney.hill@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:trelawney.hill@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

01844 353051

Councillor Joanne Hunt

[joanne.hunt@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.hunt@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

07825 789251

## District Councillors:

Ali Gordon-Creed

[ali.gordon-creed@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:ali.gordon-creed@southoxon.gov.uk)

Ed Sadler

07842 602398

[ed.sadler@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:ed.sadler@southoxon.gov.uk)

## County Councillor

Kate Gregory

[kate.gregory@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.gregory@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Nigel Champken-Woods

[nigel.champken-woods@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.champken-woods@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## MP

John Howell

01491 612852

[howelljm@parliament.uk](mailto:howelljm@parliament.uk)

## Police Community Support Office

tel: 101

[ThameHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ThameHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

## Village Hall Hire/Bookings

Andrea Tinson

07391 139707

[bookings@kbvh.org](mailto:bookings@kbvh.org)

## Play Area

Tracy Lambourne

01844 353989

[clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Aston Rowant Cricket Club Chairman

Josh Smith

07894 201 929

[chairman@astonrowantcc.com](mailto:chairman@astonrowantcc.com)

## LETTER FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

Population growth and new housing bring many changes and challenges to our communities as we well know. One change brought about is the review of representation in Parliament. Under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 the Boundary Commission is required to review the parliamentary constituencies in England every 5 years. This is to ensure that MPs represent roughly the same number of people and therefore have around the same number of people eligible to vote for them. Another key factor of a review is that boundaries respect local links between areas. Constituency names can also be changed to reflect growth. I am writing about this as there will be changes coming forward which will affect this constituency, not least that the name will change from the Henley Constituency to the Henley and Thame Constituency. This reflects the growth of Thame and the fact that it is now a larger town than Henley and indeed the largest in the constituency. It is also geographically more central to the constituency. There will be more significant change for residents to the north and west of the constituency as they will be moved to a different constituency altogether.

All of the villages which come under Cherwell District Council will come out of this constituency and be part of a new constituency which will be known as the Bicester and Woodstock Constituency. This will affect residents in Bletchington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Fencott & Murcott, Hampton Gay & Poyle, Heathfield, Horton-cum-Studley, Kirtlington, Islip, Merton, Noke, Oddington, Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp, and Weston-on-the-Green. To the West of the constituency all of those currently in the Sandford and Wittenhams Ward will move to the renamed Didcot and Wantage Constituency. This affects residents in Clifton Hampden, Culham, Marsh Baldon, Nuneham Courtenay, Sandford on Thames, and Toot Baldon.

And now to something much more local and immediate. I am sure that the news that the upper limits for Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and fly tipping have been increased will be welcome. I know that environmental crimes like these are of concern to many. I hope that we can get wide publicity of the increased fines to deter more people from such damage. The increases come into effect from the end of this month. The upper limit of fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti and fly-posting offences will increase from £150 to £500; for household waste duty of care offences from £400 to £600; and for fly-tipping offences from £400 to £1,000. This is part of the Prime Minister's Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan which was launched in March. The Government is also looking at ringfencing the money raised from these fines for enforcement and clean up activity.

Parliament will soon be going into the summer recess, but work continues. If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. My contact details are on my website - [www.johnhowell.org.uk](http://www.johnhowell.org.uk).

**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

June and July services were attended with expected numbers, along with Soul Space. Details of all services can be found in the Parish Magazine and on the Parish website.

A short review of service dates and timings is taking place. If you have any views regarding the second and fourth Sundays for Crowell and the 6pm Summer, 4pm Winter times, please let us know. Would sufficient numbers wish for a morning service on one of the Sundays? Whatever is asked for has to fit with the requirements of the other churches and clergy availability.

The formal 'Visitation' (swearing in) with the Bishop took place on the 8 June for all Wardens in the United Parish and the other churches in the Deanery of Aston and Cuddesden, at Dorchester Abbey. The Abbey was full with the Wardens and their supporters.

The Rector's ramble took place on Saturday 1 July. A walk around the four churches of the Parish to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of Jacky as Rector and to raise some funds. Prayers at each church and lunch at St Peter & St Paul, Aston Rowant. A smaller than usual number walked the whole route due holidays and illness. A back up car was available for those that needed to stop at any church. Never the less, a great fun time was had by all.

Sadly, no work in the graveyard, garden or carpark has been possible due to weather, injuries and absents. The ride-on mower hasn't been available for the large areas.

We have 3 pyramid orchids and dog tail grasses, which have returned this year. The orchids are multiplying, which is great news - up from one, two years ago.

A work party was carried out in June, with three people attending. More ivy was removed, the pews cleaned and polished and some more books cleaned and repaired. The July work party was cancelled due to holidays and the weather. The next work parties are September, October and November on the third Saturday.

We have still to replace the notices regarding no plastic waste on the compost heap and the correct use of the black and brown bins. These continue to be problem areas with thoughtless disposal.

The Quinquennial Inspection took place on 15 June and we await the architect's report. Initial comments were: the building appears to be sound. The architect has started the process of getting the damaged west window repaired under insurance and outlined a plan for toilet and kitchenette facilities to cost for feasibility.

The church will always be open when the Wardens are working in it or working in the churchyard. Please call if you would like access for private prayer at other times.

There is a christening at the end of July and a wedding planned for the beginning of September.

Copies of the United Parish Magazine are available in the church porch and inside the church. If anyone would like an e-copy of the monthly United Parish Magazine and/or the weekly on-line service booklet then please e-mail the parish office at [csarc@btinternet.com](mailto:csarc@btinternet.com)

**Andy & Maggs Warman**

(Church Wardens) 01844 351909 [themwarmans@btinternet.com](mailto:themwarmans@btinternet.com)

# THE COUNTRY WORKSHOP



*Sam Hunt*

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# ARPC – CAN YOU HELP US PLEASE?

The parish council has limited funds with which to look after the area we all live in. From time-to-time ad hoc tasks need attention. It's clear that South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council have less money to play with. Indeed, no doubt you'll have noticed the 'rewilding' of roadsides and elsewhere; this appears to be cover for saving money... by not cutting grass. This means that the parish will have to cover more of their responsibilities.

Parish councillors have a choice when it comes to maintenance:

- We can choose to pay contractors for work to be carried out (but that means less for other things that we need to do).
- We can undertake the work ourselves (with help), or
- We leave the matter unattended (which is less than ideal).

The council doesn't want to increase the precept - which feeds into council tax - any more than necessary. It also doesn't want the parish to go to rack and ruin. That leaves us with only the second of the options – doing what we can ourselves.

## WHERE YOU COME IN

The parish council wants to create a network of parishioners who are happy to be called upon to lend an occasional hand. The network will be run via a WhatsApp group. When up and running, a call for help will be put out and those available asked to respond. Residents not on WhatsApp can be called by phone.

It's hoped that we won't need to make regular requests but when one is made there will be no pressure to help.

So, can you help us build a network of community-minded people who have a little time, on occasion, to give to the parish? As long as you're fit and over 16 you'll be welcomed. And if you're new to the parish, it should be a great way to meet others.

If you are interested, please email [adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk) or call 07785 905120.

**Adam Bernstein**





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# ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Parish Council meetings were held on Wednesday 14 June and Wednesday 12 July where the planning applications detailed below were discussed.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 as there is no meeting in August.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

**P23/S1704/FUL** Shepherds Crook - Change of use from pub to 3-bed house. Objection submitted last time, and a further **OBJECTION** submitted 6 June.

## WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS:

None

## PLANNING DECISIONS OF SODC:

None

## PLANNING DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING:

None

## PLANNING INSPECTORATE APPEAL:

**APP/Q3115/W/23/3323268** - 150 Houses North of Chinnor. We objected to the original application and intend to respond to the appeal after liaising with Chinnor & Sydenham Parish Councils to coordinate a similar response. Closing date for comments - 19 July.

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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## ARPC FOOTPATH AND AMENITIES GROUP

The walkway at Fiveways has been repaired, thanks to the Parish Council who funded the work. We were pleased by the number of people who asked about the repair and then showed their gratitude for the work. It shows how many people are using Fiveways as part of their daily walks.

The permissive path has also been repaired by Thames Water following the water leak – once again thank you to the people who reported the leak, the number of complaints submitted by parishioner's almost certainly pressurised Thames Water to complete the repair.

We have appointed a new grass cutting contractor who completed the belated first cut on the 'lanes' in the parish, a second cut is scheduled by the time these notes have been published. A full review of the grass cutting maintenance work required in the parish is being undertaken by the parish council. When complete this will be displayed on the parish council web site.

Our thanks to Peter Hetherington who organised and then led the parish Walk on July 2nd, it was good to see parishioners on the walk from Benson.

Can you please put Oct 21st and 22nd into your diaries for the autumn Litter Pick, more details in the next notes.

In the last notes we highlighted the updated Walks at the Foot of the Chilterns booklet – can we remind any newcomers to the parish that a copy is available to you by contacting Tracy Lambourne the parish clerk.

I am pleased to say that we have a Pleck Wood co-ordinator volunteer – there will be work to do in the autumn which will include the planting of more daffodils following the success of the ones planted last autumn.

Finally, can I point you to the request made by Councillor Bernstein for volunteers (page 11), the more people we can get to volunteer within the parish the easier it will be to keep the villages beautiful places to live.

**Steven Sowerby**

Chair of Footpaths and Amenities Group

[stevensowerby@hotmail.com](mailto:stevensowerby@hotmail.com)

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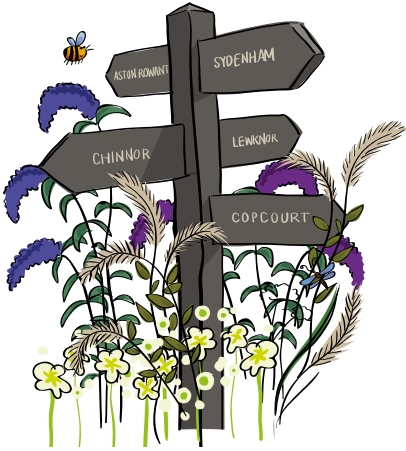
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## NEWS FROM FIVEWAYS



I am recently back from Scotland salmon fishing – we were extremely lucky and caught two which were returned as always. The salmon are in drastic decline over most of Scotland not due to river quality but, it is believed, the marine environment - this is also impacting seabirds etc. What to do about it is compounded by complex river management in Scotland.

Anyway – back to Fiveways. The walkway over the mysterious ditch, which we know little about has worn out. People seemed keen to keep the walkway rather than fill it in which would have needed a digger so probably

would have been more expensive. It has therefore been repaired.

The wild flowers are doing well with some yellow rattle finally doing its job at the top end. There is a lot of yellow toadflax on the site with a long flowering period. The ox-eyed daisies have been fantastic this year as have the wild roses. It has become overgrown, this is normal at this time of year but weather conditions – rain and then sunshine seem to have enhanced the growth. I try to clear it but it has gone wild whilst I have been away. The self-sown shrub by the bench is a Spindle Berry (see picture) and will be left to grow, the lesser knapweed (purple) is starting to spread, the Jubilee mulberry is doing well and is being watered. No fish have been seen since the Spring.



There does seem a consensus finally that the pest houses (plague) were on the Stadt Way beyond the copse at Fiveways.

I have suggested we have a tree person/officer to record where new trees have been planted in the parish and monitor them – some die! This would be unpaid, but would suit a keen (dog) walker! We have just checked on the two oak saplings we planted on the path down from Pleck Wood and sadly they have died. It is difficult to water them there. If anyone has any oaks or even is an acorn collector...let me know.

**Mike Eaton**

[mike.eaton@btopenworld.com](mailto:mike.eaton@btopenworld.com)

# INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARK

In November 2022 the KBPFCo was formed by local parents on behalf of the Aston Rowant Parish Council to progress the refurbishment of the **Kingston Blount village playground**. The feedback from our community engagement was used to create initial playground designs and following a review process we were pleased to award the work to DISCOVERY TIMBER PLAY, who come with a wealth of experience and have recently installed playgrounds in the local area.

We will be keeping existing play equipment that is in good condition and replacing the damaged items. THE NEW JEEP and ACTIVITY CENTRES will come complete with exciting new features: fireman's pole, scramble nets, suspension bridge, climbing wall, crawl tunnel and bench seating to name a few. We have also made some exciting new additions with the inclusion of a ZIP WIRE and additional bench seating. The fence will also be replaced this summer as a priority.

We hope that you are all as excited about the new designs as we are and that you would like to support the refurbishment of this much loved community asset.

## • NEW PLAYGROUND DESIGN •



### NEW ITEMS INCLUDE:

- LARGE ACTIVITY CENTRE
- SMALL ACTIVITY CENTRE
- JEEP
- SENSORY PANELS
- ZIP WIRE
- MORE PICNIC BENCHES

The total playground renovation costs are **£50,000** and we have already raised **£17,000** through various fundraising activities and grants, including a donation from both the Aston Rowant Parish Council and Hillwerke Recreation Trust.

**WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO**, however we have more events planned and more grants to apply for over the coming months, but as the grants process is very competitive we can't rely on this method of fundraising to completely fill the gap.

After deducting the cost of the fence replacement and the money we have already secured, our remaining fundraising target is **£33,000** and we desperately **NEED YOUR HELP** to make these plans a reality!



# WE NEED YOUR HELP

We really hope you would consider supporting this project by kindly giving a donation.  
Payment methods provided below:

**By BACS:** The Kingston Blount Park Fundraising Committee. Sort Code: 60-10-28,  
Account Number: 17656966 (NATWEST)

**Online:** [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/kb-park\\*](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/kb-park*)

**By Cheque:** Payable to 'Kingston Blount Park Fundraising Committee'. Please put it in an envelope marked for the KBPFCo and drop it round to Laura Purse at Chiltern Cottage, The Green, Kingston Blount. Or to discuss alternative options and Business Donations please contact the committee via the details provided below.

\*Please note donations made via the Justgiving page will incur a transaction fee. If you'd like the project to receive 100% of your money please choose one of the other donation methods provided.

We understand we are living in hard financial times for many but with 350 households within the Parish we are really hoping we can raise a significant amount of money through donations. We are sure you agree this refurbishment work is long overdue. Please therefore give what you can and let's invest in this much loved community

asset, our local children and provide an inviting space for visiting children as well. THANK YOU for your continued support!

The KBPFCo  
The Kingston Blount Park Fundraising Committee



@KINGSTONBLOUNTPARKFUNDRAISINGCOMMITTEE  
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### **FAMILY HAIR SALON**



Firstly, can we thank everyone who contributed to the success of Rowachella. It was a great evening enjoyed by so many people from the parish. We are planning to repeat the evening again next year and will publish the date as soon as we can.

It is a continuation of the success we have enjoyed with the combination of junior training and bar opening on a Friday night, this has now established itself as a major social event in the summer. Weather permitting it will continue to the end of the cricket season, bar is also open on Saturday and Sunday whenever cricket is being played. Please check the club website [astonrowantcc.com](http://astonrowantcc.com) for details on opening hours.

As we have reached the halfway point of the cricket season it is worth summarising where the senior teams are in their respective leagues. The season has been dominated by the weather with all teams having had 3 games completely washed out when rivals have been able to play.

Whilst not impossible it is unlikely that the first team will retain their Home Counties Premier League title, the loss of the games to the weather and a couple of narrow defeats means this season will be a rebuilding season following the loss as a player of Wes Morricks, who whilst not playing for the club remains in charge of our successful coaching team.

The second team have recovered from a poor start and are slowly climbing the Cherwell League Division 1 table. In contrast the third team are challenging for promotion in League 4A after winning 4 games on the trot. The fourth team are rebuilding following last year's relegation to Division 7A and the team with a mixture of youngsters and older players have won 6 out of the last 7 games to give themselves a chance to return to Division 6 at the first time of asking. With the return of university players and the school holidays all the teams will be stronger in the second half of the season.

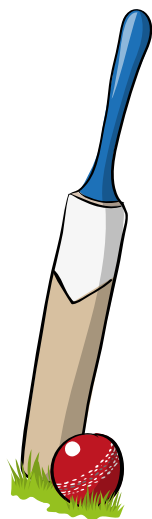
As reported in the last notes we have developed a draft proposal for a wooden pavilion on the bottom field, to be sited on or close to the current forest school site and by the time these notes are published we will be holding consultation meetings at the cricket ground. The proposal is only at a draft state and we want to get feedback from both members and parishioners before we submit a planning application. We have shared the draft plans with both the parish council and the Cherwell Cricket League.

Finally, further congratulations to James Coles, in the last notes we congratulated James on his maiden century, now we have to note his 180 made for Sussex against Derbyshire last week.

**Steven Sowerby**

Aston Rowant CC

[www.astonrowantcc.com](http://www.astonrowantcc.com)



## 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 Mark's home are £25, or a shoot can be arranged at your family home if you prefer.

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## LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

I wonder what your memories of sports day are. Finding hidden skills with an egg and spoon? Trying to stay upright in the sack race? Choosing a three-legged race partner that isn't a foot taller than you?

At the end of term we had our Sports Enrichment Week and what a week we had! On Monday we had Circus in a Day visit. We learnt gymnastics ribbon routines; walked the balance beam; tried pedal-goes and flower sticks; learnt to balance a peacock feather in various positions, spin plates and do tricks; we tried the diablo, poi, hula hooping and juggling.

On Tuesday we tried out Sumo wrestling. The protective Sumo wrestler costume gave us the freedom to really let ourselves go and tackle our opponents with vigour before inevitably rolling around laughing...literally!

On the Wednesday we enjoyed a fabulous Sports Day. The whole school gathered together in their house teams to have fun, to work together in various fun physical activities and challenges in the morning and compete in different races in the afternoon.

On Thursday we had yoga lessons. Not only does yoga improve balance, strength, endurance, and aerobic capacity in children it also improves mindfulness and offers psychological benefits for children as well. The children responded well to both the physical element and the mindfulness challenge.

On Friday we learnt skipping skills. Children (and adults!) had skipping ropes with counters on and had an initial skip to set a score which they then had to beat. I think the adults were the most competitive!

In addition to our multitude of sporting activities we also linked sport to PSHE, focusing on resilience, personal strengths and teamwork, for the real importance of sports day in school is what it does for the spirits and camaraderie of the school community. Team sports are known to encourage a healthy level of competition and also collaboration as the children work together to achieve a goal. It is a great time for the children to practise supporting each other through both successes and failure.

What's more, it is an opportunity for children who don't enjoy academia, but who are skilled in sports, to really celebrate their achievements, and receive some recognition from their classmates.

The importance of a sports week in school cannot be overstated. It is a moment in the calendar to celebrate extra-curricular activities and to demonstrate that school is about more than just academic achievement. It is also about being part of a supportive and productive community. Furthermore, it creates unique memories that stay with us forever.

**Helen France**

Headteacher

## TESSA WYATT'S COUNTRYSIDE DIARY

Sadly, our dear next door neighbours have had to leave their cottage as old age has finally caught up with them. Jim Bird kept his garden at No.10 The Green as a kitchen garden for over 60 years. It was a celebration of the old way of living in which you planted your seeds, and grew what you needed to sustain you though the year. He grew potatoes, brussels sprouts, cabbages, lettuces, onions, shallots, runner beans, carrots, rhubarb, and had a lovely big mint patch. He didn't grow tomatoes though – I suspect because he didn't like them! The rest of the garden was given over to seasonal flowers, grown in a strip alongside the front path. First came the daffodils, then the bluebells (Spanish ones unfortunately) followed by wall flowers, lupins and all topped off by three standard rose bushes.

Jim had to stop gardening just 18 months ago, and his tidy, regimented patch has been allowed to run wild until such time as a new occupier takes over the cottage. While it's sad to see the elegant, disciplined kitchen garden go, the wonderful explosion of wild plants that have taken over is a sight to see. Speedwell of course, and beautiful vivid blue alkanet, mallow, ox eye daisies among many others, and the tallest ragwort I think I've ever seen.

All this new growth has produced a profusion of butterflies, and more species of hoverfly including the handsome hornet mimic hoverfly, which is huge! I nearly jumped out of my skin when one decided to investigate the piece of cake I was enjoying in my own garden one day before all the rain came.

Ragwort has a very bad reputation for being poisonous to livestock and humans and so most people rush to dig or pull it up if it invades their gardens or fields. I must say I clear Katie's paddock of it as soon as I see the first little rosettes appear. Both these "babies" and also old, wilted plants that have gone over are tempting to equine palates, because the sugars in them make them tasty. However, ragwort is an important plant in the wonderful system that knits our wildlife together. It is home to cinnabar moth caterpillars, which love to munch their way through the leaves. Timing being everything, they rarely appear on the plant until it has flowered, therefore guaranteeing a crop for next year before they destroy it. Another lovely little insect that I have only seen on ragwort is a very pretty little orangey red coloured beetle with pink wings. So pretty, but I'm afraid I couldn't find out its name, so if anyone knows what it is, do please let me know!



I have been leaving a corner of our garden to grow wild for the past three years, and was delighted to see our very first orchid, a bright pink pyramid, glowing amongst the bright blue of the Canterbury bells and harebells. I do hope there will be more next year. Meanwhile it is time to top the long grass, so as soon as the flowers have faded, it will be out with the hook! The grass is too long to trim or mow – it went potty this year and has laid itself flat in places so it's back to using old fashioned tools. Jim would be pleased, as it was he who taught me how to swing the hook without cutting my feet off!

It rained on St Swithin's Day, I wonder if it will rain until September! As I write, it's July, and I can see a shower approaching across the fields behind the cottage, marching towards Thame. We shall see, won't we?

**Tessa Wyatt**



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For more details or to apply please contact the administrator:

**Peter Lambert**

01844 352617

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## ST PETER & ST PAUL'S BAT WALK

Chinnor Churches Goes Wild! (CCGW) is a group of people in Chinnor who are concerned with promoting things Eco within the Churches. Over the last few years CCGW has organised a variety of activities which have been reported in the parish magazine. Part of CCGW's work has been conducting surveys, for example surveys of wild flowers, hedgehogs, moths and birds.

The latest survey was held on Saturday 8 July when 20 people went on a bat walk around the Aston Rowant St Peter & St Paul's church. The whole evening was headed up by wildlife expert Tim Arnold who has led us on walks before and to whom we are very grateful.

We met at 9pm for refreshments followed by a fascinating opening talk by Tim within the church. As if to order, a solitary bat flew down the aisle as Tim was speaking! We knew there were bats in AR church since we have to clean bat droppings up in the chancel. Tim's pre bat walk talk was most informative since few of us knew much about them – we can only 'see' them at dusk, we can't hear them (their communication frequencies are about three times higher than we can hear).

Tim introduced us to bat monitors. One was a small handheld unit, the size of a TV remote, which reduced the bat sound frequencies so we could hear them. The other was a much more sophisticated unit which plugs into a mobile phone. It tells us what kind of bat it is, the frequency and direction of travel.

At about 9.15pm we went outside and listened to the bats. The most common we heard were common pipistrelle bats which are very small – weighing the same as a 20p piece. They have a wingspan of only 20cm. Apparently, they can eat up to 3000 insects a night!!! Other bats we heard were soprano-pipistrelle, brown long-eared and a Natters bat. Over the hour we listened we heard about two-dozen bats. Their calls divide into two groups. Firstly, communication calls which are, for example: "hello, I'm Fred." Secondly, there are echo-location hunting calls which change when the bat detects prey and acoustically 'locks-on' to it. For pipistrelles such calls are known as feeding buzz. Although we know there are bats roosting in the church, we can't say if the bats we heard were actual church bats or those belonging to other roosts in Aston village. Certainly, we ascertained that Aston Rowant has a lively colony of bats.

CCGW owns a bat monitor (the first type) and if anyone would like to borrow this monitor to do a bat survey of their own, please contact one of the CCGW team or a member of the ministry team. (Note, phone numbers are given in the parish magazine.)

**Revd Brian Griffiths**



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# CHINNOR VILLAGE CENTRE

Hope you are all enjoying the wonderful summer weather we have been having, I know lots of you are taking advantage of the wonderful refurbished garden and new furniture at the Chinnor Village Centre courtesy of Chinnor Parish Council. Lovely to sit and relax in the gardens and enjoy some light refreshments from the coffee shop.

We had a wonderful time during Chinnor Open Gardens and it was great to see so many visitors to the village, a very well organised and attended event, it was a pleasure to be part of it, our mini bus was well used and the fantastic team of volunteers made sure you had refreshments.

Additional opportunities are arising for volunteers to complement our team in all areas of the centre, it may be a few hours in Friendship Club, playing board games, making cups of tea, or just chatting and giving support. Stroke Club is flourishing again, so if you would like to give support to those in need, please we would love to hear from you. Forget Me Knot Café numbers continue to increase, so if you like music come on down and join in the fun. If that doesn't appeal, there are lots of positions in the coffee shop from waiting on tables, washing up, cashier, taking orders, clearing tables. No previous experience necessary as full training will be provided. Minibus drivers and assistants to ensure members can attend the centre. Fundraisers join the fundraising team or come to us with a fundraising idea. Make a difference and get involved in your community, opportunity to meet new friends and give something back.

The chatty café scheme is still operating, along with 5Aside Chess, the Social Prescriber continues to attend the coffee shop every other week, and we have talks from Age UK and Dementia Oxford.

We hope to be offering exercise classes for the over 60s. and there are lots of clubs and societies who use the Village Centre.

Great to see young families visiting the centre again, and we have a special menu for the little ones, along with high chairs and toys to keep them happy.

So do drop in and say hello, see what's on offer, if you have any ideas or would like to get involved contact Nettie on 07711337243 or Michele 07779732097 or [info@chinnorvillagecentre.org](mailto:info@chinnorvillagecentre.org)





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**Copy deadline for the October/November issue is 17th September.**

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