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# PARISH NOTES



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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	07470 441857

## 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 photos 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 June/July issue is 20th May.**

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 01844 353989

## Parish Councillors:

Chairman Adam Bernstein  
adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 07785 905120  
Councillor Helen Birks  
helen.birks@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 07921 840360  
Councillor Deborah Chaplin  
deborah.chaplin@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 01844 354648  
Matthew Day  
matthew.day@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 01844 351300  
Councillor Trelawney Hill, Aston Rowant  
trelawney.hill@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 01844 353051  
Councillor Joanne Hunt  
joanne.hunt@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 07825 789251

## District Councillors:

Ali Gordon-Creed ali.gordon-creed@southoxon.gov.uk  
Ed Sadler ed.sadler@southoxon.gov.uk 07842 602398

## County Councillor

Kate Gregory kate.gregory@oxfordshire.gov.uk  
Nigel Champken-Woods nigel.champken-woods@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## MP

John Howell 01491 613088 john.howell.mp@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

Josh Smith 07894 201 929 chairman@astonrowantcc.com

## LETTER FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

Issues around the environment are never far away as there are so many important issues to pay attention to. As I write this month it's The Big Plastic Count. I'm joining lots of people across the country counting the single use plastic that I use this week. It will be interesting to see the data for this year to see how we are doing in moving away from single use plastics. It does take time to change our habits and indeed the manufacture of products. Since the introduction of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England in 2018 significant progress has been made to address plastic pollution, including a ban on microbeads and restricting the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, plastic-stemmed cotton buds, plastic plates, trays, bowls, cutlery, balloon sticks and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers.



Just as the need to reduce our plastic has become more widely known so too are concerns on the testing on animals of chemicals used as ingredients in cosmetics. The Government has recognised the public concern around this and has recently introduced measures to ensure that no new licences will be granted for animal testing of chemicals that are exclusively intended to be used as ingredients in cosmetics products. This is more good news.

Another concern raised with me recently is for our hedgerows which are an important part of our landscape. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is moving forward on several fronts on this. There are schemes to encourage farmers to maintain and restore existing hedgerows, while also planting more. Defra is also supporting farmers in assessing the condition of hedgerows, and to manage them in a way that will work for wildlife and improve biodiversity. However, it's not all about business. There are also plans in progress for domestic hedgerow regulations which will, among other things protect nesting birds in the season.

Another area which I know is of interest to constituents is the growing dependence on new technology and the risk of alienation that this can lead to for some people. We live in an increasingly online world and it is not going to change. This means that digital skills are important - from the basics that people need to make the most of online connectivity, to the skills needed in every job, to the high-level skills for the growing number of specialist jobs in the economy. The Government is committed to helping those who need support to acquire basic digital skills and is also working to remove barriers. This is all part of its broader strategy to reduce digital exclusion and is very welcome.

As always I am interested to know the issues that concern constituents. The best way to contact me is via email: [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:john.howell.mp@parliament.uk).

**John Howell MP**

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

## Play area

No doubt those with young families will have used the play area adjacent to the village hall in Kingston Blount. Similarly, they'll have noticed that the equipment is old, tired and in need of replacement.

There's only so much maintenance that can be done to failing equipment and so a number of villagers formed a committee late in 2022, on behalf of the parish council, to formulate a plan to fundraise to renovate what could be repaired and replace what couldn't be saved. Led by Laura Purse, the nine-strong Kingston Blount Park Fundraising Committee has worked hard for the parish and has met its target.

The anticipated cost of the works is in the region of £50,000 and the committee sought funding from multiple sources. And it's done so with great success – most notably with a presentation at the end of February to SODC that could, if all goes to plan, secure just over £20,000. Beyond this other monies have been raised through grant applications, fundraising events, and donations.

That one grant from SODC, if successful would take the project over the finishing line. And it's a remarkable achievement that, once legal niceties are dealt with, should see parishioners and the surrounding communities that travel to the parish benefit greatly from a new play area this autumn.

The committee has demonstrated with aplomb what can be done through individual and collective effort and, just as importantly, what happens when individuals give to society rather than take.

## Parish council vacancy

And on that note, I want to remind readers that the parish council has a vacancy following the resignation of a councillor at the end of 2023. We would be happy to hear from anyone interested in joining our number.

Being a councillor can be very rewarding, especially where individuals 'get stuck in'. The role isn't overly difficult – we are, after all, considered to be volunteers that do our best. And nor is it necessarily time consuming. That said, the council meets 11 times a year and there are ad hoc tasks that need to be undertaken. The role would suit those that work as much it would a retiree. The only qualification, to an extent, is to have an objective mind and a willingness to participate.

If you would like to consider becoming a councillor, contact the clerk, Tracy Lambourne, via [clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk). And if you want to know more without committing, come along to a council meeting. We meet at 1930hrs on the second Wednesday - October to March in Kingston Blount Village Hall and April to September (no August meeting) in Aston Rowant Church.

## Parishioner of the Year

Moving on, the council is again running Parishioner of the Year where it is seeking nominations for two £50 awards – one for those under 18 and another for those 18 or over. The aim is to recognise the good works of a parishioner who has selflessly done something for the parish – for example, helping a neighbour, running a club, or clearing litter. Again, nominations to the clerk by 30 April. (See details on p40.)

## FTTP

Lastly, I want to address FTTP in the parish. It's been a personal campaign of mine which despite no lack of effort on my part and no lack of response from the parish, has been met with a number of moving dates for (non) delivery from Openreach – latest being April 2024 which I no longer believe.

The campaign was not helped by COVID and most certainly was given a kick in the teeth from the government when it removed the Gigabit vouchers from us as other providers – such as Airband, Gigaclear and Trooli – are said to be coming to the parish. I understand that some along the B4009 have access to FTTP via these companies but no one else has service yet.

My contact has left Openreach and messages to the team go unanswered, so there's little else that I can do to further FTTP. Regrettably, I have to surrender to the fact that while we will eventually get full fibre we have to wait until providers decide to connect us.

## Adam Bernstein

Chairman, Aston Rowant Parish Council

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

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# ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Parish Council meetings were held on Wednesday 14th February and Wednesday 13th March where the planning applications detailed below were discussed.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 10th April.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

**P24/S0135/T28** Intention to install 1 x 9m wooden pole (7.2m above ground) outside Yukari, Butts Way, Aston Rowant. By BT Openreach. For information only, no facility to comment.

**P24/S0075/DA** Without planning permission, the formation of an access onto a classified road (“the Access”) by the infilling of an existing drainage ditch, the removal of a section of existing hedge row and erection of a five-bar gate. (SE21/293). We maintain our previous objection on original application P19/S2062/FUL. See appeals below.

**P24/S0662/DIS** Discharge of conditions 3 (surface water drainage), 4 (foul drainage works drainage) and 5 (disabled access) on application P23/S2916/FUL (Construction of new pavilion on Pitch 2 at AR Cricket Club. For information only, no facility to comment.

**P24/S0679/AG** Erection of a grain store at Hill Farm, Stokenchurch, HP14 3YJ. NO OBJECTION.

## WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS:

None

## PLANNING DECISIONS OF SODC:

**P23/S4304/HH** Proposed single storey rear extension at: Avila, 4 Plowden Park, AR. GRANTED.

## PLANNING DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING:

None

## PLANNING INSPECTORATE APPEAL:

Appeal Ref: **APP/Q3115/C/24/3336385** against Planning Enforcement of unauthorised formation of an access onto a classified road (“the Access”) by the infilling of an existing drainage ditch, the removal of a section of existing hedge row and erection of a five-bar gate on linked application: P19/S2062/FUL refused by SODC on 27/NOV/2019. We objected to the original application, and have commented similarly on the appeal.

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

At last, the rain seems to have slowed, if not stopped, and spring is almost here. Walking around the parish the show of daffodils and other spring flowers always puts a smile on your face and reminds us that summer is just around the corner.

The Duck Race (see the Fiveways notes p17) was a success, thank you to everyone who came – it will be repeated next year. Can I also point you to Peter Hetherington's notes on the Parish walk (p21). I can recommend it to anyone and can almost guarantee that you will see parts of the parish that you have not seen before.

The Spring Litter Pick is booked for the 18th and 19th May. We will pick on Kingston Hill on the Saturday, meet in Cherry Tree carpark at 10am and on Sunday will pick the A40 and B4009 in Aston Rowant meet at the Lambert Arms at 10am. Anyone wishing to join contact either myself or Adam Bernstein the Parish Council Chairman.

The weather has been the main topic of the last two months and the flooding in Church Lane (Aston Rowant) and in KB on both Brook Street and on the Stert Road has been unprecedented. The weather has also meant that jobs which we hoped to have done by now have not been done. The wire on the permissive path has been repaired, but the mesh damaged when the water main burst has not yet been started. Also, the repair to the Moors Path where it joins the Stert Road has also been delayed.

Another joy of spring is to see the lambs – the lamb fold at the farm should be there for all to see by the time the Notes are published. But can I ask all dogwalkers to take extra caution and keep their dogs on leashes.

### Steven Sowerby

Chair of Footpaths and  
Amenities Group  
stevensowerby@hotmail.com  
01844 351392



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## THE UNITED PARISH TEAM

### Rector

Rev'd Dr. Jacky Barr 07769 825305  
rector@unitedparish.church  
01844 352027

### Associate Priest

Rev'd Joan DeVal 01844 353404

### Licensed Lay Minister (L.L.M)

Margaret Poole 01844 281042

### Retired Priests

Rev'd Des Foote 01844 355945

Rev'd Dr. Brian Griffiths

01844 355953

Rev'd Tony Whittaker

01844 352472

### United Parish Office

Tricia Prescott 01844 352472  
office@unitedparish.church

### Parish Safeguarding Officer

Jane Tucker 07890 346781  
safeguarding@unitedparish.church

### Churchwarden at Aston Rowant

Richard Boarder 07795681263  
Vacancy

### Churchwardens at Crowell

Andy Warman 01844351909

Maggs Warman 01844351909

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# CROWELL CHURCH

Where has the time gone? Easter here already and gone by the time you read this. The churchyard and carpark garden are bursting into life. Little seems to have been lost over the winter. Weather permitting, we will be paying attention to these areas over the coming few weeks. It's great to see those graves that are being attended, bursting into floral tributes as well.

Soul Space in March saw the 'Alternative Mothering Sunday'. A quiet time of reflection with music, readings and poems. Specifically for mothers who are struggling with their children, mothers who have lost children and mothers who have not been blessed with children. Pebbles were given out on arrival to be kept during the service and then placed on the Altar at the end. The idea being, you left your thoughts and troubles in the hands of God. The Altar had a display.

The Winter Forage on Saturday 17 February was well attended and enjoyed by all. This was led by Marcus Woods and team junior. Many different things were tried under his watchful eye.

A Lent course was held each Wednesday afternoon from 21 February until 20 March. Those attending had discussions about different subjects each week. There was a running theme with video.

Work parties have now been resumed after the winter pause. The first being held on Saturday 16 March. The weather was kind and allowed some mowing to be done.

Work parties will continue on the 3rd Saturday of each month until and including November, missing July and August.

Following on from our architect led inspection relating to the fabric of the church, we have now had our Area Deans inspection relating to the administration of the church. We await his report.

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.

## Andy & Maggs Warman

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Duck Racing is over for another year! The turnout was good and there was the last minute rush after afternoon naps for some of the younger ones. The weather was kind to us and some children paddled and got very wet as usual. The course was very very fast due to the never ending rain. Many people enjoyed the tea and lovely cakes at the church as well.

Mike Smith gets the prize for the first fish seen at Fiveways on February 15th – believed to be a Bullhead. I will try and get a photograph of a specimen.

The Snowdrops are from the cottage which was on the site ca 1800 but of course long gone now. Children love to find artefacts in the stream, pottery shards and glass for example, many of which come from the cottage. Snowdrops are not a native plant, arriving sometime between 1700 and 1800 – there is some debate on the date. The Romans introduced a lot of our spring flowers. Globally the Victorians spread many plants in their trouser turn ups – this included invasive species in the British Empire such as Briar roses. The Holm Oak was introduced in the 1600s – we have one which is doing very well.

Some daffodils were already out for duck racing. That is the first time they have been out at the same time as the snowdrops, which didn't seem to flower so well this year. The daffodils seem better at the lower end this year, particularly around the big Black Poplar where they have multiplied many times. At the time of writing the Wood Anemones and Wild Garlic are in flower and the Marsh Marigolds in bud. The Fritillaria lilies are just coming out too. We planted over a hundred, but sadly not many have survived. The top spot nationally are the Oxford Water Meadows.

Some will note that we have planted out some hollies I have been given. They look alright for now but survival is normally only fifty percent – they look really tough but they cannot survive our dry summers!

**Mike Eaton**

mike.eaton@btopenworld.com



# CHINNOR & DISTRICT u3a

Spring is a time of awakening, renewal and regrowth and perhaps thoughts turn to getting out and about and joining the Chinnor and District u3a.

There are six levels of walking and visits including those planned by the Churches, Gardening, Natural History, and Outings Groups. If you prefer activities that are less active there are plenty of pursuits such as Art4All, Art History or cards, to name a few. Why not dip in to the website and find out more [u3asites.org.uk/chinnor/home](http://u3asites.org.uk/chinnor/home)

Showcasing this month is the Movement2 Music Group. Meeting in the Reading Room on the 1st Tuesday of the month and facilitated by a dance teacher, the concept behind this is to be inspired by music (from a range of genres) to experience the health benefits of conscious movement (according to ability and inclination) and to have fun with experimentation and movement. So, if music makes you want to move but you don't like regimented exercise this may appeal to you. Don't know if it is for you – come along and find out. Try before you buy with no obligation

u3a 'Thirsty Thursdays'. Thursday 11 April 2024 18:00 at the Chinnor Village Centre is a chance to find out more about the u3a or meet fellow members with drink, nibbles and music. Contact me if you would like to join us.

**Nettie Dearmun** (Chair Chinnor & District u3a)

[chair1chinnoru3a@gmail.com](mailto:chair1chinnoru3a@gmail.com)

07711 337243



# D-DAY 80

Commemorating the heroes of  
the Battle of Normandy

On 5 and 6 June this year, a series of major commemorations in the UK and France will honour the brave personnel who risked their lives for freedom and peace.

D-Day was the allied forces' operation involving the coordinated efforts of more than 155,000 troops supported by 11,500 aircraft, and 6,900 naval vessels in an assault on five Normandy beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Integral to its success was the courage of the thousands of brave men that stormed the beaches that day. D-Day altered the course of history, signalling the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany and leading, ultimately, to victory.

In commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day, homage is being paid to the resilience and fortitude of the British veterans who played a crucial role in this pivotal moment of the Second World War. The invasion claimed the lives of thousands of allied soldiers. These brave men – many just teenagers – left their families and their futures behind to liberate Western Europe from the grip of the Nazis. We must remember the sacrifices they made.

There are many events taking place nationally and in France, but more locally Parish Councillors have been discussing if an event should be organised here, and what form it should take. Bearing in mind this is only just over two months away, we would welcome any suggestions from parishioners and some of the ideas already put forward include:

1. Beacon Lighting followed by Fish & Chip Supper and bar at ARCC (subject to ARCC's agreement).
2. Afternoon Tea for over 80's and families with suitable background music – Glenn Miller for example.
3. 1940's dinner (with appropriate war-time recipes with uniformed waitresses).
4. Something on Aston Rowant Green, maybe in collaboration with school if it is undertaking a project/display (subject to the approval/agreement of the owner).
5. Showing of a film in the Village Hall – such as Saving Private Ryan.

Please let us know your thoughts by email:  
clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk  
by Sunday 21/April

# NOTICEBOARD

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN KINGSTON BLOUNT, ASTON ROWANT & NEARBY

### Hunger Lunch

The Hunger Lunch in aid of the Steppin' Stone Centre in Oxford was held in Aston Rowant church on Monday 18th March and I'm pleased to say that we raised £271 as well as several boxes of foodstuffs.

Thanks to everyone who came and supported this event and extra thanks to all those who made soup and washed up afterwards.

**Rona Knight**

01844 351315

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### Fishing

There is excellent private fly fishing for wild brown trout and rainbows in a chalk stream fed lake a mile way. There is a short waiting list to join the small syndicate started in the 1940s. Members are allowed to take guests. Email for more details.

**Mike Eaton**

mike.eaton@btopenworld.com

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### Sydenham Fayre

**Saturday 1st June 2024 12.30pm to 4pm**

A fun family day out including live entertainment, children's games, dog show, vintage cars, BBQ, tearoom and stalls.

The long-established event, co-ordinated and run entirely by villagers, raises funds for local groups and causes, supporting schools, community organisations and facilities in the surrounding area. Last year it raised over £9,000 for local causes.

Whilst the road through the village will be closed for the day, extensive free parking is available on the edge of the village. Disabled parking will be available.

As a community event, the success of the day relies so much on the enthusiasm of visitors from the neighbouring town and villages...so bring the family and help make Sydenham Fayre a highlight in the village's calendar.

For more information, please visit the website: [www.sydenham-fayre.com](http://www.sydenham-fayre.com)

## Friday Coffee Mornings

Come and enjoy a hot drink and a cake or snack! Everyone is welcome of all ages and we have plenty of toys available for young children.

We will be open for business from 10.15 – 12.00noon on:

**April 12th and 26th**

**May 10th and 24th**

**June 7th and 21st**

Browse the bookshelf, feel free to take as many as you like and maybe bring some of your own to donate.

Proceeds will go towards the playground refurbishment.



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## Walk in Wendover and Wendover Woods

Sunday 26 May 10am.

I am leading this circular 6.5m walk from Wendover Free Car Park, which is at the back of the library HP22 6DX. It is a joint venture with the Ramblers and forms part of the Chiltern Conservation Board Spring Walking Festival. Wendover Hale, Wendover Woods and the Boddington Hill Fort and the Woods cafe. The walk is free of charge, the paths are good, and it is suitable for anyone over 12 who can walk 6.5 miles. One long but steady hill. Dogs only on leads please. Leisurely pace. Book for this walk on line on the Chiltern Conservation Board website or with me if you want to join as a guest of Ramblers or our Parish Council Footpath and Amenities Group. The Whole Festival runs for two weeks from 25 May - 9 June with a walk or visit every day. I am only involved on this particular day.

**Peter Hetherington**

OCC Path Warden for Aston Rowant Parish

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## Thame Market

Tuesday is market day in Thame with excellent fruit and veg and in the Spring this includes a large selection of top quality herbaceous plants.

**Mike Eaton**

It's where all the cool canines and funky felines want their pet-parents to shop.

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# RACE NIGHT



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**19:30-TILL LATE**  
**1ST RACE AT 20:00**

**SAT 11th**  
**MAY**

A village favourite, back by popular demand - Heather Holt and her 'Tote Totties' are hosting an 'interactive race night' that is sure to be 'hands down' one of the most fun filled evenings this May, so 'don't stall' buy a ticket now! **Crowd participation required!**



**BOOK TICKETS BY VISITING:**  
<https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/racenight/11thmay2024>



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Money raised over the fundraising target for the initial refurbishment will go to the Parish Council for playground maintenance and other associated costs.

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The cricket season proper starts on May 11th, with pre-season games before and, as usual, things are gearing up at the club for the start of the season. Work parties have been working inside the main pavilion redecorating after the water leak before Xmas.

As ever the club details are available on our website [www.astonrowantcc.com](http://www.astonrowantcc.com)

But what is not usual is the new pavilion under construction on the bottom field. Work on the foundations has started and by the time you read this we should be able to see the building rising in the corner of the field by Town Farm. Our thanks to Jamie Clark and family for their assistance – without their help we would not be able to construct the building.

We would also like to thank the donors who have contributed to the crowd funding scheme through our website. At the time of writing we have raised £11.5k including Gift Aid which is both fantastic and appreciated. Whilst the crowd funding appeal has now closed, you can still help by donating through the club website.

To our members: could we remind people that membership renewal is due on 1st April. After long debate we have had to raise the 1881 membership from £50 to £60. This is the first rise since the 1881 club started 5 years ago. For newcomers to the parish this membership as well as your club membership gives a 20% discount at the bar and automatic receipt of the club newsletters. Social membership has also increased to £30.

The full bar service will start on April 26th which is the start of the junior training programme – after this the bar will be open every Friday night and on Saturdays whenever cricket is being played. Please check the website for fixture details.

Rowachella Sat. 15th June – we launched pre-sale tickets for Rowachella last week and managed to sell 78 within the first 48 hours! We're now up to 100 tickets sold which is great bearing in mind that we only sold 67 pre-sales last year. Buy your tickets at: [rowachella.co.uk/tickets](http://rowachella.co.uk/tickets)

We've had to put all prices up on tickets this year (only by £1-£2) as we want to try where possible to keep everything affordable. The ticket vendors have unfortunately put up their booking fees this year, so you will notice tickets seem more expensive though, in actual fact, only about the same amount is going to the club. A great remedy for all of these pesky price rises and tackling inflation is of course our 'Volunteering' scheme!

As previously noted, Ben Le Bas is rejoining us as our 1st team overseas player. We are also very pleased to announce promising youngster Ivan Lockem has joined us as the 2nd XI overseas player from South Africa! Ivan will be about for the season and will be helping out at the club as well as doing some hours up at Wormsley. Both will be involved in the Friday night junior training session.

Lastly can I repeat the message which we send every year – in addition to new players which are always welcome we as a club need both umpires and scorers. These roles are paid and training can be given to anyone interested.

**Steven Sowerby**

Aston Rowant CC

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# LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

I wonder if you have a favourite poem? Many people have a favourite book or film or song but fewer seem to have a favourite poem. I was introduced to ‘If’ by Rudyard Kipling when I was in primary school and have loved it ever since. It provides reflections on how to live life with the challenge to make the most of every minute we have. It encourages many of the values that we have in school today.

Poetry is also an important part of National Curriculum literacy from Key Stage 1 onwards, with children from the age of 5 encouraged to enjoy reading poetry, recite some by heart, and write their own poems. So, how do poems help children with learning, and how can you inspire a love of poetry in primary-school children? Firstly, to look at how they help learning.

Poetry has a way of engaging children from the start. From much-loved nursery rhymes such as ‘Ring a Ring o’ Roses’ to classics such as ‘Daffodils’ or modern poems such as ‘The Snail and the Whale’ poems often appeal to even the most reluctant readers.

Children with an awareness of rhythm and rhyming skills often tend to become better readers. The rhythm and rhyme in poetry supports children in developing reading fluency, which engages reluctant readers, as well as for encouraging more confident readers to pay closer attention to the words on the page - an important skill for their reading comprehension.

Poetry can help spelling too. A focus on rhyme helps children to look at patterns within words and how they are formed, which supports word recognition and spelling.

Carefully selected poems can also inspire children to become writers themselves. Writing poems encourages children to reflect on their experiences and shape them using their own voice. They can give form and significance to something important to them and consider how to communicate it to the reader or to the listener.

So, given the educational benefits, the challenge is how to inspire a love of poetry in primary-school children. This year for World Book Day we challenged the children to come dressed as their favourite poem. They had amazing creative poetic ideas! We had such variety from a fox in his socks, a cat in his hat, Mrs Butler (no Derek Drew though), the sound collector, some revolting rhymes and nursery rhymes.

Throughout the day, children worked with their Houses and were exposed to all types of poetry. One workshop focused on performance of poetry and the use of voice. Another used newspapers to help the children make poems. A different workshop used the poem ‘When I blew the magic dust’ to stimulate children writing their own poems. Finally, we used ‘The Highway Rat’ as inspiration for children to paint images to illustrate the poem. The children loved the day and already speak of their favourite poem.

So I wonder what’s your favourite poem? Why do you love it? What does it mean to you? I would love to know. Bonus points if you can recite it from memory!

**Helen France**

Headteacher



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# TESSA WYATT'S COUNTRYSIDE DIARY

A very dear friend of mine had a somewhat unpleasant experience a couple of nights ago. She accidentally breathed in a couple of ladybirds which had been hiding in the mouthpiece of her inhaler. She said she had never tasted anything so disgusting in her life and was never again going to use her inhaler without all the lights on!

I must say, while very pretty and subject to one of the most iconic nursery rhymes known to man, they can be an awful nuisance. A group of at least thirty hibernate behind our spare room curtains every winter, and of course are now in the process of waking up. Apart from their habit of queuing to get out of the windows, we find them trundling about in the most unusual places, like the bath, or inside kitchen cupboards. I found one peacefully napping on my pillow when I pulled the covers back last night.

It is also clothes moth season, tick season, every other kind of Unwelcome Pests Season, and I have spent a fortune recently on various methods of murdering the offending critters.

John set up a humane rat trap in the garden the other day, with the intention of capturing the unwanted visitors to the bird feeders and rehoming them to a county far, far away, like Berkshire. Duly baited and set, we left the trap to do its job and retreated for the night. The next morning, the trap was sprung, and the bait was pressed up against the cage wall, but no occupant. Now, we all know that squirrels are highly evolved, very intelligent tree rats, but we hadn't expected them to be bright enough to reach their little arms into the trap, spring it and grab the bait. Although the piece of cheese was still inside the cage, it had been scraped down to the rind, so clearly Sid had had a good meal, while Roland had evaded capture.

But hey, the daffodils are out, the daisies are springing into flower, the bees are busy and the queen wasps are bashing against the windows trying to reach the outside world. They hibernate in our loft, in places which are totally inaccessible, so we have to put up with them, too.

Maybe we might get a few days of dry weather, and March may go out like a lamb, you never know.

**Tessa Wyatt**



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# CHILTERN WALKING FESTIVAL

We are delighted to announce the 13th Chilterns Walking Festival will take place 18 May to 2 June and would be grateful if you could publicise. It will feature a programme of over 50 walks and events throughout the Chilterns. We have a number of new walks to share the stories, landscapes, heritage and beauty of the Chilterns in the spring. Here is a flavour of what's on offer:

## **Meet the farmers and learn about nature-friendly farming in the Chilterns**

Join a farm walk and find out what some of our Chilterns farmers are doing to encourage nature friendly farming whilst producing high quality food. You will get to see parts of the farm not normally open to the public, including restored wildflower meadows, hedgerows rich in wildlife and grazing cows. Enjoy some beautiful views, and a variety of habitats whilst seeing and hearing first-hand the difference that this sensitive farming approach makes to wildlife.

## **Explore the beautiful Chess Valley**

We are very pleased to have a number of walks on offer in the Chess Valley as part of this Festival. The River Chess, is one of the 9 chalk streams in the Chilterns. Join the Chess Smarter Water Catchment Project team to find out more about these rare and precious habitats. There is a family-friendly night time walk along the River Chess to spot wildlife as the sun sets. Or a Sarratt circular walk taking in the watercress beds and lots of heritage features.

**Chilterns from dawn to dusk.** Come join the early morning skylark walk and hear the joyful sounds of the skylarks in the fields near Shiplake. Or at the other end of the day enjoy a Sundown Saunter around Maidensgrove Common following ancient tracks around the Common, looking out for wild flowers and listening to the evening birdsong. There are guided nature walks taking in nature reserves and special habitats, a chance to meet the rangers and volunteers who care for the wildlife, hear about their conservation work and do some wildlife watching!



**History & Heritage** Discover the mysterious Earthworks around Gallowstree Common, Arts & Crafts architecture in Amersham and Chesham or the former rural industries around High Wycombe. Follow some of the ancient routes which criss-cross the Chilterns, exploring Drovers routes (and inns!), or take the Chinnor & Princes Risborough railway and see some of the industrial heritage in the area, providing a fascinating glimpse of the past.

...plus map reading courses, historic garden tours, mindfulness walks, a Stanley Spencer gallery walk around Cookham, a Deep Time walk around Chinnor and more.

Listings are now live. See [www.chilterns.org.uk/walkingfest](http://www.chilterns.org.uk/walkingfest)

To keep updated join our Chilterns Walking Festival facebook page.

## CHINNER CHURCHES GO WILD! - HEDGEHOGS

From previous parish magazine articles, you will be aware that the Chinnor Churches Go Wild! have been doing surveys in our graveyards for such things as grasses, flowers, trees, birds, hedgehogs, reptiles, bats, butterflies and moths. However, we want to do more than just count or record things – we want to enhance our churchyards and make them into wildlife and nature havens. So far we have done things like building bee, bird, bat and hedgehog boxes, scattered wild seeds and planted trees.

So what is the latest on our hedgehogs surveys? Over many days we have surveyed all four churchyards using a hedgehog footprint tunnel. Our surveys showed no evidence of hedgehogs in any of the churchyards, however we know that there are hedgehogs in the gardens of parishioners who live in and around the churches. Discussions with the churchwardens as well as the Diocese suggest this was due to the churchyard surrounding walls which are built to exclude badgers and therefore inherently exclude hedgehogs.

So what could we do to encourage hedgehogs in the locality? Our conclusion is if we cannot encourage them in our actual churchyards, maybe we can encourage them in the homes of the parish. Thus, we have purchased some hedgehog highway doors as seen in the photo. These enable hedgehogs to pass through gardens in search of food, water and shelter.



If you would like to have one of these hedgehog highway doors, then please contact either Brian Griffiths or Laurretta Milligan. We've bought one for our front fence, how about you? Alternatively, if you don't want the one in the photograph, you can also get your own from the internet.

**Brian Griffiths**

[brianjgriffiths@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brianjgriffiths@yahoo.co.uk)

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# ASTON ROWANT NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Reaching the end of a very mild February, the signs of Spring could be spotted everywhere on the nature reserve. Snowdrops up and flowering, the lovely songbirds making a right commotion getting ready for the changing season, and slow worms being recorded under the reptile mats.

Whilst vegetation cover was still fairly sparse, our surveying team had some fantastic bird spots, including Chiff-Chaff being heard for the first time on the 11th of March.



Meadow Pipits – this species is a common sight across moorland and heathland habitats, however in the autumn and winter it moves to more lowland areas, where it gathers in small flocks.



In addition to some great bird records, we've also had some nice moth records submitted from the previous surveying season. Over on the Linky Down area of the reserve, a juniper feeding moth - Juniper Berry moth was recorded – this species appears to be very rare in southern England, with just a handful of recent records, so its great to get records for this little moth on the site.



Finally, a four-legged record from the NNR. On site, we have three deer species providing an important conservation grazing component in addition to rabbits and the sheep flocks. Muntjac and Roe can be found on both sides of the site, whilst the much bigger Fallow, are only found on the south side of the site. This group of bucks have been spotted moving between Linky Down and the motorway paddocks and are showing the typical darker winter coats which will give way to the more common tan with white spotting.

**Steph Wilson**

Natural England, Reserve Manager

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Whether it's running a club, helping a neighbour in need, privately keeping an area free of litter or some other community-minded task, the parish council wants to hear about it. We are seeking nominations from the public for two awards – one for those aged under 18 and another for those aged over 18.

Each winner of an award will receive a £50 gift in recognition of their efforts.

There are few criteria other than the individual being a resident of this parish and, of course, being nominated for their good works.

So, if you know of suitable nominees, please send the information requested (below) to the clerk of the parish, Tracy Lambourne at [clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk). Alternatively, complete the form below and drop it through the letterbox of The Cottage, High Street, Kingston Blount OX39 4SJ.

The deadline for entries is 30 April 2024.

## Nominee

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee age on 30 April 2024: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for nomination (what they have done): \_\_\_\_\_

## Proposer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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