

ASTON ROWANT, KINGSTON BLOUNT & CROWELL

# PARISH NOTES



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

Email: [sallyparishnotes@gmail.com](mailto:sallyparishnotes@gmail.com)

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our team of distributors,  
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hard work.

Information in this publication is, as far as we know, accurate. The Parish Notes however, cannot accept responsibility for the quality of the information, services or items provided by other people or organisations.



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## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

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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: Hayley Hopwood	07470 441857

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

## Planning application in Church Lane

At the start of December, a planning application for permission in principle was lodged with SODC “for the construction of a minimum of one dwelling and a maximum of one dwelling” on a field in open countryside at the bottom of Church Lane in Aston Rowant – just as the bridleway which leads down to Fiveways Corner begins.

Some, including Aston Rowant Parish Council, felt that the application was cynically lodged at time when it would be ‘lost’ missed by the council and public as the Christmas melee took hold; the closing date for comments, 4 January, was four days before the council next met.

However, the ‘scheme’ backfired as the council hurriedly organised a meeting in Aston Rowant Church on 27 December to detail its objection to the application and to encourage others to do the same.

For the sake of clarity, the council’s position isn’t about saying ‘no’ to every application, but rather, ‘yes’ to the right applications in the right locations and where the project has been designed sympathetically.

This particular application sought to expand the built area of the parish into open fields, bring – possibly – several houses and allied traffic down a narrow and historic lane, and open the area up to infill.

It’s important to recognise that this is a problem not just for the Aston Rowant side of the parish – it’s a problem for the whole parish as we are all surrounded by green fields. And it’s precisely this that makes the parish special.

Thankfully SODC listened to the council and concerned parishioners and very quickly refused the application.

## A new councillor

Moving on, the parish council is meant to be run by a full complement of seven parish councillors. Since the resignation of one in November 2023 it’s been run by six. However, despite pleas, we had little success in recruiting a seventh person. But then, just like London buses, at the end of last year we had three candidates interested in the vacant seat. One dropped out before Christmas and when the council met on 8 January it heard from the remaining two, voting to elect Kingston Blount resident Hayley Hopwood.

By definition there had to be a winner and loser as the council cannot seat more than seven councillors, but that doesn’t mean that we’re any less grateful for the two excellent applicants. It needs to be noted that the council would have taken on both if it were permitted to.

The council operates for the benefit of parishioners; it would be good to have more attend council meetings just to see what it does, how it operates, and the issues before it. Each meeting has a short ‘open forum’ where residents can outline concerns.

## Can you help with the Parish Notes?

Lastly, the Parish Notes is an important part of village life as not everyone reads Facebook or the parish website – that said, there is a link on the home page,

astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk, to subscribe for weekly updates.

Julian Knight, who has for some 20 years curated the advertising on the publication, has signalled his intention to stand down (at the end of April 2025). Advertising is a crucial part of the Parish Notes and keeps it viable. The role is not onerous, requiring just a few hours work every couple of months.

In overview, the publication carries adverts for some 20 businesses and each one must be refreshed and invoiced for their entry - mostly once a year, but some may be single entry only. The role does not involve layout or distribution – only the ‘handling’ of advertisers.

Given that it’s a role for the parish – just like that of a councillor, it is voluntary.

If you’re interested please make contact (sallyparishnotes@gmail.com), it would be a shame if the publication folded.

## Adam Bernstein

Chairman, Aston Rowant Parish Council

adam.bernstein@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk



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# 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  
Councillor Matthew Day  
matthew.day@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk 01844 351300  
Councillor Trelawney Hill  
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

Freddie van Mierlo freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk

## Police Community Support Office

tel: 101 ThameHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

## Village Hall Hire/Bookings

Hayley Hopwood 07470 441857 bookings@kbvh.org

## Play Area

Tracy Lambourne 01844 353989 clerk@astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk

## Aston Rowant Cricket Club Chairman

Josh Smith 07894 201929 chairman@astonrowantcc.com

# ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Parish Council meetings were held on Wednesday 11th of December 2024 and Wednesday 8th January 2025 where the planning applications detailed below were discussed. The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 12th February.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

**P24/S3482/HH** Erection of an orangery at The Marlins, Aston Rowant Road, Aston Rowant. **NO OBJECTION/FULLY SUPPORT.**

**P24/S3844/PIP** Permission in principle for the construction of a minimum of one dwelling and a maximum of one dwelling at The Paddock, Church Lane, Aston Rowant. Response was needed before 4/Jan under the 5-week PiP application rules so we arranged a public meeting for 27/Dec and lodged an objection, await SODC decision.

**P24/S3981/LDP** Certificate of lawful development for proposed use or development: Proposed loft conversion with three roof lights and new air source heat pump at Chilthorn House, 5 Plowden Park, Aston Rowant (in addition to granted application P24/S1444/HH). The certificate only seeks confirmation that the proposed development is lawful.

**WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS:** None.

## PLANNING DECISIONS OF SODC:

**P24/S3223/HH** Single storey bay extension & garden room to the existing house. Demolition of the existing garden store, to be replaced with the a single storey outbuilding at Lower Farm House Stert Road Kingston Blount. **GRANTED.**

**P24/S3482/HH** Erection of an orangery at Marlins, Aston Rowant Road, AR – **GRANTED.**

## PLANNING DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING:

**P24/S3844/PIP** Permission in principle for the construction of a minimum of one dwelling and a maximum of one dwelling at The Paddock, Church Lane, Aston Rowant. **REFUSED.**

**APPLICATIONS IN NEIGHBOURING PARISHES (which may affect Aston Rowant Parish)** None.

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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# CHINNOR PETS

# ARPC FOOTPATH AND AMENITIES GROUP

Happy New Year to everyone who uses the footpaths and enjoys the countryside. I've just returned from a walk whilst it was -3C, which proves the point that there is no bad weather, just bad clothing. The small pointed icicles formed by the combination of very cold weather and freezing fog were amazing – I've never seen anything like it.

In response to questions about the Footpaths and Amenities Group (FAAG) it is a subcommittee funded by the Parish Council. Its purpose is to liaise with the Parish Council and other relevant bodies to maintain and improve the facilities, environment and amenities for both parishioners and wild life. The most noticeable aspects of the group are the coordination of the Parish Maintenance Tasks and the maintenance and improvements to Fiveways and Pleck Wood. We also organise the annual Duck Race and twice a year the Parish Litter Picks.

Looking forward we have the Duck Race and Cream Teas in the church on Sunday Feb.16th from 2pm after a FAAG meeting on Tuesday the 11th in KB Village Hall at 7.30. We are always looking for volunteers for the Sunday event and if anyone wants to help, please either come to the meeting or contact myself or Tracy Lambourne the parish clerk. Equally if you read Mike Eaton's Fiveways report he is looking for volunteers with an interest in the local environment – anyone interested could come to the meeting too.

The problems with Church Lane continue with a lot of damage due to water being unable to run through the blocked ditches resulting in water flowing down the lane. The issue has been raised with the Oxfordshire County Council officer who has visited the site. We are hoping to improve the lane before the Duck Race but please be aware that the lane will be muddy so please wear appropriate footwear.

Can we remind householders that keeping the ditches clear to allow the streams to flow is your riparian responsibility – as well as damaging the roads/lanes the water which will get back into the streams eventually becomes polluted causing issues downstream.

If you read Peter Heatherington's notes we had to cancel the Parish Walk scheduled for the 5th Jan. this has been rearranged for July 6th – more details will follow.

Finally, to anyone looking at planning a new walk or are new to the parish can we point you to the 'Walks at the Foot of the Chilterns' booklet that has been published by the Parish Council. It is free to newcomers to the parish and £3 to everyone else. Contact either myself or Tracy Lambourne the parish clerk.

## Steven Sowerby

Chair of Footpaths and Amenities Group

stevensowerby@hotmail.com

01844 351392

# FIVEWAYS

Happy New Year to you all.

Over Christmas and the new year the Winterbourne has been up and down with the rain – its reservoir deep in the Chilterns is quite full. The flows have been significant, so the small fish will have moved to cover in the calmer lower section, downstream of the dog pool. They won't come out until the flows moderate. It is worth noticing that the gravel is very clean and good for spawning.

In Lewknor Brook the trout will be starting to move upstream now that the water is deeper. They like the current and the clean gravel, and will drop downstream when spawning is over. They are shy but are sometimes visible from the road bridge in Nethercote Lane. I saw kingfishers fishing there some weeks ago. Kingfishers catch sticklebacks or bullheads. I have never seen kingfishers near the Holbrook – however I have seen dippers locally, which are quite rare birds. They were fishing in a stream smaller than the Holbrook and taking shrimps from the bottom.



Shrimps are common in the Holbrook and feed on leaves which fall into the stream. The fish that eat them are probably hiding in the overgrown stretch down from the dog pool. Hopefully they had a good spawning season in the spring, when they were much more visible. The sticklebacks seem to have been swept downstream with the flooding but hopefully will return. Decades ago, they were common at the junction of the Holbrook with

the Winterbourne and caught by my children with nets. However the water flows were better then, even in the summer, with more depth of water.

I would be interested to hear from anyone with an interest in the local environment. There are environmental groups in Watlington that are very active but in our parish we are less organised.

It is worth mentioning that the local springs are often warmer in winter than the air, which helps wildlife. The clear spring water contains inorganic nanoparticles with an hydrated organic outer shell from within the Chilterns; these aggregate and settle only when the water is still to form silt. The Aston Winterbourne starts near Woodway farm and heads down Aston Road to the church. It unfortunately gains road washings from the B4009 at the upper end. It then mirrors the route of the main sewer. When in flood it comes out of blocked ditches and flows, in part, down through the sewage manholes along the road, which is bad news. Clear ditches would help stop road debris being washed downstream and into the sewers. The Winterbourne enters Church Lane to eventually merge with the Holbrook ( Holbrook is a corruption of Old Brook).

As it goes down Church Lane the ditch is problematic for many reasons and the Winterbourne moves to the road and washes the dirty surface downstream, also eroding the un-metalled track. This makes access difficult.

We have been unable to clear the stream out yet, but duck racing is scheduled on Sunday the 16th February (see ad on p20). The snowdrops are already showing but not in flower yet, hopefully they will be at their best by then. In sheltered spots the daffodils are coming up too. The walkway/bridge is a concern, hopefully it will be repaired in time. As usual 2-4pm with cream teas in the church which will continue until 4.30.



**Mike Eaton**

mike.eaton@btopenworld.com



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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

# CROWELL CHURCH

We trust that everyone was able to enjoy the Christmas season without too many mishaps, illnesses or sad events. We wish you all a happy and successful New Year. As Jacky the Rector would say, 'let's make it a banger'.

Crowell Carol Service was held on Friday 20 December at 1900. What a great turn out to sing all the favourite carols and listen to bible lessons and poetry. Mulled wine was served to lubricate the voices along with mince pies.

Crowell hosted the combined Parish Holy Communion Service on 29 December at 1030. Another great turn out followed by refreshments for which many stayed and socialised.



We had a funeral service on 16 January which was particularly sad but very thought provoking. Sydenham choir, plus Maggs, supported the service and were much appreciated by the family. The family had arranged two magnificent flower displays for the service, which they donated to the church. What a fantastic gesture and gratefully accepted.

Soul Space will resume every second Sunday at 1600 at Crowell. Normal services on 2nd and 4th Sundays are now at 1600hrs to aid access before dark. We try to have at least one Holy Communion service per month. Some services have to be combined to achieve this. Please see the monthly service sheet posted on the church door, on the website or in the church Parish Magazine for differences.

The weather hasn't been kind, so little work has been done in the churchyard. Some families braved the weather and tended graves for Christmas, making the churchyard look kept. We thank them. Sadly some people are still using the area next to the Larter grave to dump rubbish. The family have cleared some of this away. Please have respect. The compost heap and rubbish bins are by the Lych-Gate. Nowhere else is acceptable.

The field hedge next to the carpark gate has been cut back but not far enough – so still needs some serious pruning back to improve exit view towards Kingston Blount.

We are still planning next year's wilding areas and notices. We don't want to have to cordon off areas.

The dead ivy covered trees between the carpark and the B4009 will be investigated with a view to removing them for safety and to avoid them falling onto the B4009 or into the carpark. We intend to replace them with similar native trees. We have a couple of hawthorn that have been donated already.

Work Parties will recommence on the second Saturday of each month from March at 10:00hrs.

Fire Extinguishers were serviced and tested. Its great fun doing the water ones, well we like playing with water don't we? Can't wait for the foam ones turn.

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.

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 United Parish Magazine and/or the weekly on-line service booklet then please e-mail the parish office at office@unitedparish.church

Outstanding jobs for which help or sponsorship/donations would be gratefully accepted.

1. Stained glass window repair (insurance job) but needs to have a protective screen fitted when back in position. Need to consider a screen for the other stained glass window.
2. 2 x churchyard walls rebuilt and or removed. (some ongoing talks re one and tendering in progress)
3. Bell Cote and Bell restored. (some sponsorship already received)
4. South West Buttress wall base rebuilt. (tendering in progress)
5. Altar furniture and linen. (some sponsorship already received)
6. Remove dead trees on B4009 and replant

**Andy & Maggs Warman**

(Church Wardens) 01844 351909 themwarmans@btinternet.com



WHAT'S ON

*February*

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Happy New Year. Whilst it is the middle of winter things are stirring within the cricket club.

We will run a variety of teams this summer, 4 senior teams on a Saturday, a ladies soft ball team, eight junior teams and a Social Sunday team – so we have cricket for all ages and all skills.

The fixtures for the first team are out, the season starts on the 10th May with the first team away at Oxford Downs. We have new members on the committee, welcome to Chris North, Ben Porter and James Robinson. Also, the captains have been appointed for the 4 senior Saturday teams congratulations to Max Mannerling (1sts), the returning Wes Merrick (2nds), Yovann Ilangakoon (3rds), whilst Paul McKay remains captain of the 4th team. As we are every year, we are looking for both umpires and scorers, both positions are paid and training will be given for both. If you are interested, please contact the club on the website, details of which are below.

We also have plans to start the indoor nets at Icknield Community College, the juniors will have started on a Friday night by the time these notes are published, if anyone is interested in registering their child please contact [juniors@astonrowantcricket.co.uk](mailto:juniors@astonrowantcricket.co.uk). It is a tribute to the junior section that we already have 41 signed up for the nets.

The senior nets will start on a Thursday night, again at Icknield, from 20th Feb for 6 weeks.

The work on finishing the new pavilion continues. The building is functional but there are still a number of internal and external jobs to complete before the season starts. We will have an opening event to mark the completion of what has been a huge achievement for the club.

We are planning to start the Friday night training and bar opening from the first Friday after Easter – April 25th – but this will be weather permitting. More details in the next Parish Notes.

The membership fees both playing and social are due on 1st April, details of which are available on the club website [astonrowantcricketclub.co.uk](http://astonrowantcricketclub.co.uk), a reminder will again be in the next notes.

Finally, by now you will have had a letter from the club about this summer's music festival Rowachella on Saturday the 14th June. Discount tickets for the event are available to parishioners as part of an early bird scheme until the 28th March, details on the website [www.rowachalla.co.uk](http://www.rowachalla.co.uk).

This event and the 1881 club are the main fundraising events for the club which allows us to concentrate on youth(junior) cricket, this approach has been successful in recent times and drove the building of the pavilion which will host more junior cricket than senior this year. Can we thank in advance people for their support and understanding.

**Steven Sowerby**

Aston Rowant CC [www.astonrowantcc.com](http://www.astonrowantcc.com)



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# **KBAR QUIZ NIGHT**

**Friday 7th February 2025**



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# NOTICEBOARD

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

### Friday Coffee Mornings

Kingston Blount Village Hall

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  
10.15am – 12pm on:

**March 7th and 21st**

**April 4th**

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



## DUCK RACES • SNOWDROP WALK • CREAM TEAS



Sunday 16th February 2025 2-4pm

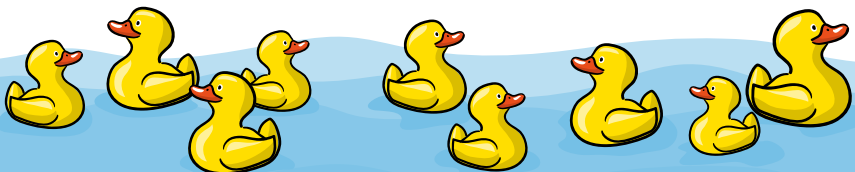
Aston Rowant

Duck Races on the Holbrook stream

Cream Teas served in Aston Rowant Church

Please wear boots/wellies!

Organised jointly by Aston Rowant Parish Council and the church





## A New Parish Walk Date

We were very sorry to have to cancel the New Year Parish Walk scheduled for 5 January. It was the first time in over 25 years of walks that we have had to cancel. Snow and ice were forecast. In the end it turned out to be a very wet morning. Two of us did a shorter version of the same walk that day anyway! I desperately wanted a walk having not taken much exercise since Christmas.

The Parish Council have decided to offer another chance to do a very similar but slightly shorter scenic Parish Walk on Sunday 6th July meeting at 10.00. This time the walk will be from the Leathern Bottle in Lewknor. This walk is 6 miles and will be at a leisurely pace. There are 2 hills but no stiles. Park on the left hand side of the Lewknor village road not in the pub car park please. There will be views as far as Wittenham Clumps, and into the Wormsley Estate. We also walk through the estate. No booking needed.

### Peter Hetherington

Walk leader, Aston Rowant Parish Council  
07767 647714

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## A Hunger Lunch for the homeless of Oxford

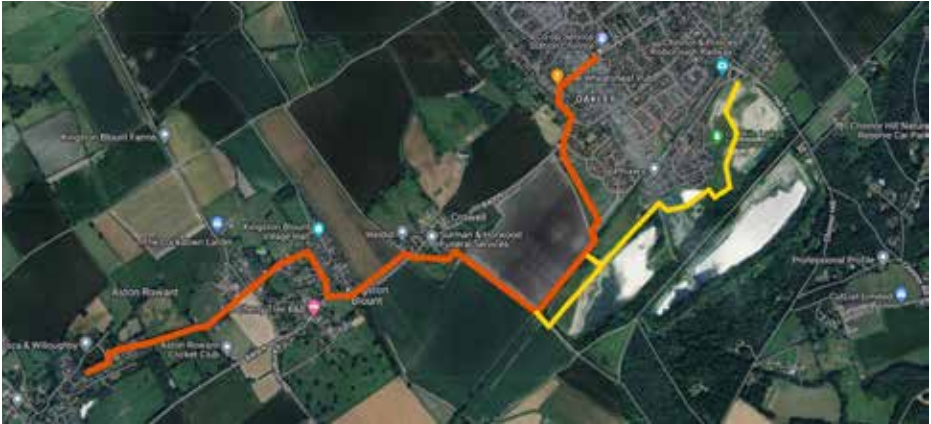
A hunger lunch in aid of The Porch's Steppin' Stone Centre will be held on Friday 14th March, 12.30-2pm, at the church of St Peter & St Paul, Aston Rowant. All are very welcome for a simple lunch of soup and bread. Cash donations and gifts of dry and tinned foodstuffs will be gratefully received.

As the name implies, The Steppin' Stone Centre supports the homeless to integrate into the community – the Parish has supported it for many years. And our contribution is greatly appreciated

### Rona Knight

01844 351315

# ASTON ROWANT TO CHINNOR WALKING ROUTE I



We are really lucky to have a good walking route from Aston Rowant to Chinnor, that is mostly traffic free (shown in red). Directions: Walking from Aston Rowant you pass the school on your left and head out along the Moors Path by the side of the cricket pitch. Cross the Stert Road, follow Brook Street and take a right into Pleck Lane, up to the B4009. Turn left and take the pavement then grass path all the way to Crowell. The path along the side of the field is a little muddy at the moment, but it will soon dry out. Cross the B4009 opposite Crowell Church and walk through the graveyard and across the green (past the old pub). Turn right onto the wide track up towards the hill. After the field on the left, turn left into a wooded straight path. This is a really nice new mud free path. It comes out on the edge of Chinnor where you can make your way back to the B4009 and into Chinnor on the pavement. For a different way home (shown in yellow), you can walk through the lakes from the Chinnor Railway car park. The chalk underfoot can be a bit slippery when wet, so take care. You then rejoin the path to Aston Rowant. The lakes are beautiful at all times of year, but particularly in the summer with lovely meadow flowers.



## POOR'S HILLOCK GARDENS



Happy 2025 to all our plot holders new and old. Let's hope the weather is kinder to us this year than last.

### Allotment benefit:

Winter gardening is an excellent form of exercise, even when other outdoor activities slow down. Preparing your allotment for the next growing season - digging over soil, cleaning debris, or maintaining your tools - keeps you moving and helps you to stay fit!

The AGM is going to take place on Tuesday 25th March at the Village Hall in Kingston Blount. The meeting will start at 7.00pm and once the formalities are completed we will have a small social. Please come along.

One of the main items on the agenda will be the election of officers. At the moment 2 posts – that of Chair and Treasurer – will become vacant from the end of March 2025. If anyone is interested, please contact either: [michaeljmousley@outlook.com](mailto:michaeljmousley@outlook.com) or [sheila.m.reynolds@outlook.com](mailto:sheila.m.reynolds@outlook.com) Nominations will be accepted at the AGM.

We do have a number of vacant plots. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Fran at: [Francesa.musaeus@hotmail.com](mailto:Francesa.musaeus@hotmail.com)

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# LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

## **Your school needs you!**

I saw a similar advert for school governors 23 years ago. I was on maternity leave having spent 8 years working in HR management in industry. To be honest I knew very little about schools other than I had loved my time in education. My daughter was 4 months old so I didn't even have an insight as a parent. Yet I felt that I had plenty of enthusiasm, a number of transferable skills and having recently moved from the North-West saw it was an opportunity to immerse myself in my local community. So I put myself forward.

I served as Governor in that same local school for 17 years only stepping down when I became Headteacher of Aston Rowant School. During that time I worked with some incredible people, learnt new diverse skills, saw the school transformed in numerous ways and was inspired to retrain to become a teacher myself.

Now Aston Rowant School is looking to expand our team of governors. Could this be an opportunity for you to both give in an extraordinary way but also receive in ways that you hadn't expected?

Everyone on our current governing board has a different reason for joining. But on the whole we all share a deep sense of community involvement, allowing us to give back to our community and make a positive impact on the success and well-being of current and future generations. Whilst doing this we are stretched, challenged, inspired and developed ourselves – often unexpectedly!

School governors come from all walks of life and professional sectors. Regardless of your background or age you will have skills and lived experience that may be beneficial for your local school. Moving any school forward does not happen in isolation and is never the result of the work of one person. It happens when the headteacher, staff team and the governors, all with different skill sets, work together for a common purpose.

So, at the start of this new year as you form your plans for the year ahead or look for new challenges - can I encourage you to consider whether this opportunity may be for you or possibly someone you know? Your school needs you!

**Helen France**

Headteacher

[office@aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office@aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk)

## KBAR VETS FOOTBALL CLUB – CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FOOTIE, BEERS & BANTER

Sometimes dads in Kingston Blount and Aston Rowant are the unfamiliar parent. Not always of course, particularly as we enter 2025, but historically the Mums knew each other through their kids. Maybe through NCT, or the chatting outside Aston Rowant School, Montessori or Ladybirds. But Dads? Well Dads were often just introduced at children's birthday parties as 'Jack's Dad' or 'Tom's Dad'. Pretty useless and in the background!

Then back in 2004/5, 'Josh's Dad' made a stand! Following the success of the KB vs AR Jubilee football match, he decided that football could be a vehicle to introduce Dads to each other, whilst also boosting the coffers of the terrible local pub, The Cherry Tree. There was no KBAR Face-Thingy in those days, so how best to corral Dads into getting their old boots back on? Using the Mum's network obviously! So, with a few phone calls and Mums 'volunteering' Dads, KBAR Vets was born with a regular 5-a-side game! In winter it took place in Thame and in Summer it took place on the KB playing fields– affectionally known as the Field of Dreams, or if you were unfortunate enough to step in a rabbit hole, the Field of Nightmares!

Initially the group was a bit of a rag-tag bunch when it came to football, but numbers soon grew as rumours got around about sweaty blokes laughing and joking in the pub on a Thursday, with the added attraction of free chips!

On principle all were welcome regardless of ability. As with most footie teams, nicknames also became the norm. Initially newbies were christened by 'Messy' after hilarious suggestions were gathered in the Cherry Tree. A name was given based on ability, personality or just a basic micky take!

However, after the first Christmas Night-Out, the naming became a more formal part of the KBAR Vets constitution, with nominations and voting for the most hilarious or outrageous taking place each December at Chang-Mai Thai restaurant in Oxford! Shirts were then handed out with the nickname printed on it regardless of whether wives approved – and of course sometimes they didn't!

Some of the less coordinated Dads like 'The Hoff', 'Ten-Past' and 'Dickie' were supplemented by better footballers like 'Danny Drag-Back', 'Valdez', 'Weeble' and 'Frainy'. The standard and seriousness of the now 7-a-side game actually improved, which in turn enhanced the after-match banter, with exaggerated tales of glorious volleys, sliding tackles and beautiful step-overs.

After a year or so the group heard of similar bands of old blokes playing football and 11-a-side matches were introduced against such illustrious named sides as 'The Old Gits' and 'Headington Butchers' and of course local rival Lewknor. Under the often questioned 'management' of 'The Colonel', followed by 'Red Russ' and then 'Weeble' results were surprisingly good, with the team unbeaten for a number of years. However, our somewhat over-inflated confidence was shattered when KBAR went on tour in 2013 to Croyde to play 'Georgeham Vets'. Maybe it was the beer

and games in The Thatch on Friday night, the karting with a hangover on Saturday morning or possibly the fact that the Devonians were just a lot better than us, but the 8-1 defeat was the only sobering part of the weekend!

Since those early years, KBAR Vets has gone from strength to strength. The team has been forced to move venues and watering holes on numerous occasions but is now comfortably homed on a brand new astro at Thame United, with post-game beers and banter at The Inn at Emmington. The Xmas Night-Out and Croyde Tour have become annual favorites, with KBAR even lifting the trophy in 2023, and with each year and innovative new member, more customs have been introduced with annual golf days, oppo-suits and even the occasional social with Wives!

However at its core KBAR Vets is about Dads from the villages getting together for a bit of exercise, some good banter and a few beverages. The numbers do hold up as the original 'Legends' are put out to pasture and new nameless KBAR dads are press-ganged and nicknamed. But if you are new to the villages and fed up with being introduced to people as 'Chardonnay's Dad' (it is 2025 of course!), then do a bit of digging and get in touch with the new committee of 'Doors-to-Manual', 'Ordinary Joe' or 'Toe-Punt', as we are always happy to kick a newbie and give them a ridiculous nickname. Non-Dads are of course welcome as well!





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## TESSA WYATT'S COUNTRYSIDE DIARY

At the time of writing, the sun is shining through the window and sadly that means I've got to pull the blind down, and I can't see the computer screen. Whoopee! At last a fine day, the second in a row and the first for ages.

The weather has been a challenge. My favourite walk down to Fiveways involved wishing I had a pair of fishing waders as Church Lane became a torrent, and the little Holbrook a proper river. Then we had hard frosts and even a bit of snow, which had Katie the pony and I practising our slalom moves down the hill to the yard. We both took off at one point when we hit the ice on the concrete track and executed an unplanned synchronised slide, failed to make the turn into the yard itself and ended up in the hedge at the bottom.

There are two yard cats, one overly friendly and completely useless, the other completely wild and untouchable. She has become quite tame recently, probably taking a hint from Toby the tame one, that perhaps we are not dangerous but worth buttering up to for extra rations, and is allowing us to stroke her.

Tinker, my enormous Maine Coon, now 14 and a half, has retired for the winter and simply swings between sleep and yelling for food. She has been staring out of the kitchen window all morning, trying to decide whether or not to risk a small trip into the garden, but not quite able to bring herself to do it. Perhaps she will venture out if I go and do a bit of winter pruning ....

The last two mornings I have woken to an actual morning chorus. Not just the odd tweet, but the real thing, with everybody singing their favourite songs as the sun began to rise. Spring isn't far away now, about another eight weeks and then the clocks go forward when evening hacking starts again and I shall be covered from head to foot in pony hair as Katie starts growing her summer coat, shedding her winter one all over me whenever I groom her. Tinker will start grooming furiously too, pulling out her winter coat which will cause fur balls – another challenge when you have a long haired cat. No amount of grooming will stop them, and in no time she will be out in the garden, eating grass in an attempt to get rid of them.

Meanwhile, the snowdrops are out, one of my neighbours has a lonely daffodil in flower, and I've even seen a couple of primroses, which seem to have got ahead of themselves. No sign of the crocuses yet, but they will pop up suddenly overnight in a few days provided the frost stays away.

I wonder how far along Spring will be by the time you read this ....

Tessa Wyatt





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**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.

Email: [sallyparishnotes@gmail.com](mailto:sallyparishnotes@gmail.com)  
Copy deadline for the April/May issue is 20th March 2025

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## PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE



The Aston Rowant Parish Council website is the place to find out what's going on at the Parish Council for Aston Rowant, Kingston Blount, Kingston Stert and Chalford. It gives easy access to the dates of council meetings, minutes, agendas, planning applications, etc. There are links to the District and County Council websites for access to the wealth of information that these provide. There's also a weekly newsletter with links on recent developments in the parish.

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

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