

ASHBRITTLE GREENHAM STAWLEY BATHEALTON KITTISFORD



# Parish news

February 2025

For the Parishes of ASHBRIITLE with GREENHAM, BATHEALTON, STAWLEY and KITTISFORD

**Church Services****Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> February**

9.30 am	Holy Communion Service	<b>St. Michael's, Stawley</b>
11.15 am	BCP Communion Service	<b>St. John the Baptist, Ashbrittle</b>
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist Service	<b>All Saints, Rockwell Green</b>

**Sun 9<sup>th</sup> February**

9.30 am	Holy Communion Service	<b>Holy Cross, Sampford Arundel</b>
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist Service	<b>All Saints, Rockwell Green</b>

**Sun 16<sup>th</sup> February**

9.30 am	Morning Prayer	<b>St. Margaret's, Thorne St. Margaret</b>
9.30 am	Holy Communion Service	<b>St. Nicholas, Kittisford</b>
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist Service	<b>All Saints, Rockwell Green</b>

**Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

9.30 am	Holy Communion Service	<b>St. Bartholomew's, Bathealton</b>
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist Service	<b>All Saints, Rockwell Green</b>
6.00 pm	Evensong	<b>Holy Cross, Sampford Arundel</b>

**Churchwardens and Clergy****Ashbrittle with Greenham**

Charles Doble, The Old Rectory, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LQ	01823 672365
David Hanks, Manley House, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LE	01823 672436

**Bathealton** Sarah Eustice, Oakwood, Spring Grove, TA4 1NL 01823 401248

**Kittisford** Annie Musgrove, Meadow Farm, Greenham, TA21 0JW 01823 672627

**Stawley** Penny Hare, Stawley Mill, Wellington, TA21 0HT 01823 672183  
Colin Haddrell, Tucks Farm, Stawley, TA21 0HS 07974 804990

**Priest-in-Charge**

Reverend Andrew Barton, 2 White Oaks, Langford Budville, TA21 0RB  
Contacts: Home/Office - Phone 01823 924007 or 07795 699737  
*Email revdbarton@gmail.com*

**Artists Wanted!**

Do you have a painting or photograph which could be used as a cover design for the Parish News? Seasonal and local images are particularly welcome. Please send hi-res images (300dpi) to Avril at [AvrilSilk@aol.com](mailto:AvrilSilk@aol.com) Portrait format is ideal if possible.

**Front cover** - "Red sky in the morning, shepherds' warning." Photograph taken by Frank Colebrooke in Greenham looking over Greenham Barton to Conygore Wood.

## Thought for the Month

### The third anniversary of war

We are approaching the bleak third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Central and Eastern Ukraine, Putin's so called 'special military operation'. As a professional soldier, I have watched with a mixture of horror and grim fascination the unfolding of events.

My early career was dominated by the Cold War stand-off between NATO and the Soviet led Warsaw Pact. Most of the British military effort then was focused on West Germany and defence of the Central European front. But as Royal Marines our task was to help hold and secure the Northern flank in Norway. We were led to believe that the combination of Soviet capability and mass would be both rapid and virtually unstoppable. War plans for the Central front envisaged a delaying battle of days rather than weeks. And so it was a surprise – no doubt to Putin as well - that when the Russian invasion was launched on 24 Feb 2022, it did not rapidly overwhelm Ukraine. Dogged and resilient defence by a more western focused, innovative and motivated Ukrainian military, against poorly led and lacklustre Russian forces, led eventually to a more static stalemate and attritional battlefield. Unfortunately, over time this will favour the much larger Russian forces, despite their eye watering losses.

### My own experiences

My thoughts have often wandered back to my own experience in Ukraine. In 1999 I was Assistant Chief of Staff for Expeditionary Operations in NATO's southern region, and the exercise director for the first NATO deployment to Ukraine in 2000, which necessitated three visits, including Kiev and Odessa. The exercise, Cooperative Partner 2000, was part of the NATO led Partnership for Peace initiative, designed to build confidence, security and relationships between NATO and former Eastern bloc Warsaw Pact members – and included the Russian Federation as observers. The objectives were based upon the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a less than benign security environment. We deployed amphibious and other shipping and forces in the Black Sea around the port of Odessa, including a Field Hospital, and conducted a wide range of training serials, including mine clearance at sea and on land, and joint command, control and communications.

The exercise gave me a fascinating insight into Ukraine and its people. The economic shock of decoupling from the Soviet Union was clearly apparent. My equivalent rank (then a Colonel) in the Ukrainian armed forces earned around \$40-50 a month, and one army Colonel explained how he

relied upon his vegetable plot to feed his family. On a visit to a Motor Rifle Division barracks of over 10,000, the Major General in command said the primary mission of those in uniform was to feed themselves in a form of collective farming. It was worth small holding farmers travelling to the central market in Odessa in the depths of winter to sell a single tray of eggs. Driving towards Mariupol, a farmer's wife sat on the roadside in freezing conditions in front of a table to sell a pig's head.

### The Odessa opera house

Conversely in Odessa, beautiful but crumbling buildings were kept scrupulously clean, and despite relative poverty there was a thriving cut flower market. I made my NATO planning staff visit the impressive Venetian built opera house in Odessa, where we paid \$3 to sit in the former royal box and watch a very *bel canto* Aida, a small injection of western capital to the local economy!

It was clear that there was a thriving black market, but I felt particularly safe, dwarfed by my personal Ukrainian driver cum security guard, and driven in a government Zil saloon. Most of my Ukrainian military interlocutors had been trained and served in the Soviet forces. However, there was clear pride in achieving national independence and the ability to forge their own identity, and I am not surprised at the comparative success and resilience of the Ukrainians over twenty years later in resisting the Russian invasion.

What lies in store is difficult to forecast. It was the Prussian Carl Von Clausewitz who noted that '*war is the pursuit of policy by other means*'. Unconditional success for either protagonist is not achievable - there will have to be a compromise. Policy – in particular that of the new Trump regime and an equivocal Europe (in which the UK is at the robust end of the spectrum), will determine to what extent the military adventurism of Putin is rewarded, nullified or thwarted – and this may set the conditions for new security paradigms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Jeremy Robbins

### Are you interested in Antiques, Vintage or Upcycling?

We have a huge selection which we are selling in aid of **Holy Cross Church, Sampford Arundel**

Please phone me on (01823) 663680 or (e-mail [jennifersparks662@btinternet.com](mailto:jennifersparks662@btinternet.com)) to let me know your requirements and we can make an appointment for you to view.

Jenny Sparks

## News from Kittisford Church

Christmas seems a long time ago but this is the first opportunity I have had to thank everyone for supporting Kittisford Church over the Christmas period in one way or another. On 13<sup>th</sup> December Perdy and Davide Fraser-Taliente hosted the Kittisford Christmas dinner in their splendid barn.

With everyone's help it was transformed into a magical Christmas banquet with the log fires roaring and fairy lights and twinkling. We all enjoyed a wonderful candlelit Christmas dinner prepared by local people. It was a fantastic community event which put everyone in the Christmas mood. We raised £900 towards the upkeep and maintenance of Kittisford Church and an additional £250 from the raffle for the international charity *Medicin sans Frontiers*.



*In party mode - Mark Pearce (left) gets a special thank-you, on behalf of the Kittisford House team, from Rev'd Andy Barton.*

Thank you to the Kittisford bell ringers who rang out the bells to start our Christmas Eve service. It was great to see the church packed with people from all over the parish, especially so many families with children of all ages from babies to teenagers. We enjoyed hearing the Christmas story, singing favourite carols and the chance to meet up with neighbours over a glass of mulled cider.

A big thankyou to everyone for supporting our little church of St Nicholas which sits at the heart of our rural community. It would be wonderful to see you at our future services and events. Information on those can be found in the Parish News and on <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

*Annie Musgrove, Churchwarden*

## The Celebration of Christmas at Stawley Church

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December the candles were lit, pews were occupied, and the mulled wine was brewing. Stawley Church hosted a celebration of Christmas which was organised by Gail Britton and John Young and performed by the Village Festival Choir. This was a joyful combination of Christmas carols and readings together with a couple of less conventional pieces which entertained the full church.

The choir provided the refreshments afterwards to round off the evening. Stawley PCC would like to thank everyone for joining them on this delightful occasion.

*Annette Haddrell*

## 'Pop-Up' in Aid of Sightsavers Charity

Many thanks to everyone who came to my Pop-Up Exhibition in Wellington before Christmas. It was lovely to see so many people dropping in and giving their support. As a result of the raffle and sales we made £500 for the charity Sightsavers.

We also had lots of coverage on the radio and local papers which helped to raise awareness of this amazing charity which aims to eradicate preventable eye conditions and blindness which threatens the sight of over 1 billion adults and children worldwide. To find out more about their work visit <https://www.sightsavers.org/>

*Annie Musgrove*



### Coffee, Cake and Chat

Ashbrittle Village Hall

**Saturday 15th February**

10.00 - 12.00 noon

**Unlimited Coffee and Delicious Home Baked Cakes available, for just £4.00.**

*Please come and join us - all welcome !*

### Wivey Link

Contact telephone no. 01984 624666



ASHBRITTLE ARTS PRESENTS

# ZEFFE

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND



KLEZMER - BALKAN - GYPSY MUSIC  
AND DANCING

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TA21 0LF

SATURDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2025

DOORS OPEN 7.00 for 7.30

WITH BAR **£10.00**

For ticket details contact [pleyland@talk21.com](mailto:pleyland@talk21.com)

## Quaker Meeting for Worship

Spiceland Quaker Meeting Uffculme  
EX15 3AZ

*We Meet for Worship at Spiceland  
every Sunday at 10.30am till 11.30am  
also available on Zoom -*

*Meeting ID:865 5570 2735 Passcode:  
498173*

*All are very welcome.*

*The Open University is offering a peace education course for the first time, thanks to a partnership between OU staff and Quakers in Britain.*

The free self-study course, *Principles and practices of peace education*, hosted on the OU's learning platform *OpenLearn*, explores how peace can be fostered in classrooms. It marks a milestone in making peace education more widely accessible.

The online course is open to all, including trainee and experienced teachers, as well as those working with young people in informal or community settings.

Participants can work through the twelve hour course at their own pace and gain a certificate of participation at the end.

Isabel Cartwright, peace education manager at Quakers in Britain, said: "We are grateful to the Open University for their investment in peace, for developing the course with us, and putting so much work into promoting it.

"The reach of *OpenLearn* will open up the potential of peace education to so many more children."

Developed in collaboration with Quakers in Britain, the course introduces themes such as inner wellbeing, constructive conflict resolution, and critical thinking about global issues. Using videos and interactive elements, it offers simple, practical ideas for use in the classroom and links to materials for further study and curriculum planning. The course also introduces theories and practice of peace education from across the UK and beyond.

## Village Oil Group

The next oil delivery is due on  
**Wednesday 12th February**

To place an order, please email:-  
[judy.milne@btopenworld.com](mailto:judy.milne@btopenworld.com) or contact  
Judy or Michael Milne on 01823 672205 by the  
Monday before the Wednesday delivery  
New members always welcome

## Stawley Community Association (SCA)

### Annual General Meeting

To be held on

Monday 24th February 2025  
at 6.00 pm

**In Stawley Village Shop and Tearoom**

.....

### We have reached our target

The SCA is very pleased to announce that the target donations of £10,000 to support Stawley Shop and Tearoom in the transfer to an all-volunteer community concern have been realised!

This was possible only by very generous donations from members of the community, together with the Stawley and Ashbrittle Parish Councils.

### Thank You!

This has given us a great start to the Shop and Tearoom being run under a very different system: it's early days yet, but the SCA and volunteers are confident that we can really make a go of it!

### Can You Spare a Few Hours to Volunteer?

We have a band of wonderful volunteers who have worked extremely hard during the transition, continue to present a clean, well-stocked Shop, and be friendly and efficient with our customers, while taking on many additional tasks required of an all-volunteer led organisation.

This is putting considerable pressure on the time and energy required from our current volunteers.

**We have asked many times before, but we need  
to ask again -  
can you spare just a few hours  
to come and help?**

**Please come and talk to us in the shop if  
you can help in any way.**

# Stawley Community Village Shop & Tea Room



## Opening hours

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 5.00pm

Saturday 8.00am to 12.00pm

Sunday 9.00am to 11.00am

**The Post Office is here every Thursday 11.30am to 1.30pm**  
**Contact: 01823 674361 or email [shop@stawleyshop.com](mailto:shop@stawleyshop.com)**

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## ***What is a Community Shop and how is it different to what we have always had?***

We as volunteers and committee members have heard this question a few times over the last few months, so we thought we should explain what is now different, and why if you shop there, you will be helping the community.

The shop has always been overseen by the Stawley Community Association (SCA) who are the leaseholders, and are responsible for the premises and much of the equipment. Until now, there have always been tenants to run the shop, so although the tenants are local people, it does mean that the profit goes to the individual.

Many volunteer run community shops make sufficient profit to give back to the community they serve, and the SCA is hopeful that this can be the case with our shop. We will gain more information over the coming months, on the ongoing running costs and will need to maintain a healthy contingency fund for possible replacement of expensive items such as chiller cabinets. Once we have a better understanding of how the shop is running this will be something we will look at.

Apart from the profit, which can now be kept here in the locality, the shop is very much part of the community. It acts as an information hub, a place to socialize and to gain new skills by being a volunteer. Local produce is stocked wherever possible, helping local businesses and a range of food and non-food supplies are available, so you don't have to drive to Wellington for the items you have forgotten; many items are price marked and very competitive.

As you will have seen elsewhere in the magazine we are holding an AGM on February 24th, this is the place and time to let us know of any ideas you have on how the shop could develop further in the future.

***As always, we look forward to seeing you at Stawley Community  
Village Shop***

## News from Stawley School

We wish you all a Happy New Year from all at Stawley Primary School. The end of 2024 was certainly eventful!

In the penultimate week of term, the children performed their Christmas Nativity at the Pavilion. It was a fantastic show that the children had been working hard on all term. The show - Lights, Camel, Action! – managed to tell the Christmas story through the medium of Strictly Come Dancing. It was great fun with camels dancing the jive; innkeepers dancing the tango and even a bit of ballet/break dancing from the staff in Class 1! It was an amazing performance from all and everyone who came to watch had a fantastic evening.

Usually, once the Christmas play is over, we can have the last week of term focusing on a range of fun Christmas activities. Unfortunately, things turned out slightly differently!

### Out of the blue.

On Monday morning of the last week of term, we got a phone call from OFSTED to say that they would be coming to inspect the school the following day. Christmas was put on hold while the inspectors came to visit and although extremely tired by this point of the term, the children and staff were amazing and really demonstrated to the inspectors exactly what Stawley School is like.

I've included some quotes from the report below, but if you would like to see the full report, you can visit the school website or the OFSTED website.

The first line reads...

*“Parents and pupils agree that Stawley Primary School is ‘like a family’. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and are fiercely loyal to their school.”*

*“Behaviour is exemplary [and] pupils have a thirst for knowledge”*

*“The school ensures that pupils’ talents and interests are developed ... this builds pupils’ confidence and resilience and prepares them well for life beyond school.”*

As you can see, we are extremely proud of the school and the report and although, by the end of the week, everyone was on their knees crawling towards the end of term, it did mean we could all enjoy a peaceful, relaxing well-earned break. I can't wait to see what 2025 brings!

*David Stirzaker*

*Once again - very well done. Eds*



## Pat's Guitar Services

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The Old Mill, Tracebridge, Wellington,

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



# The Quizzers Page

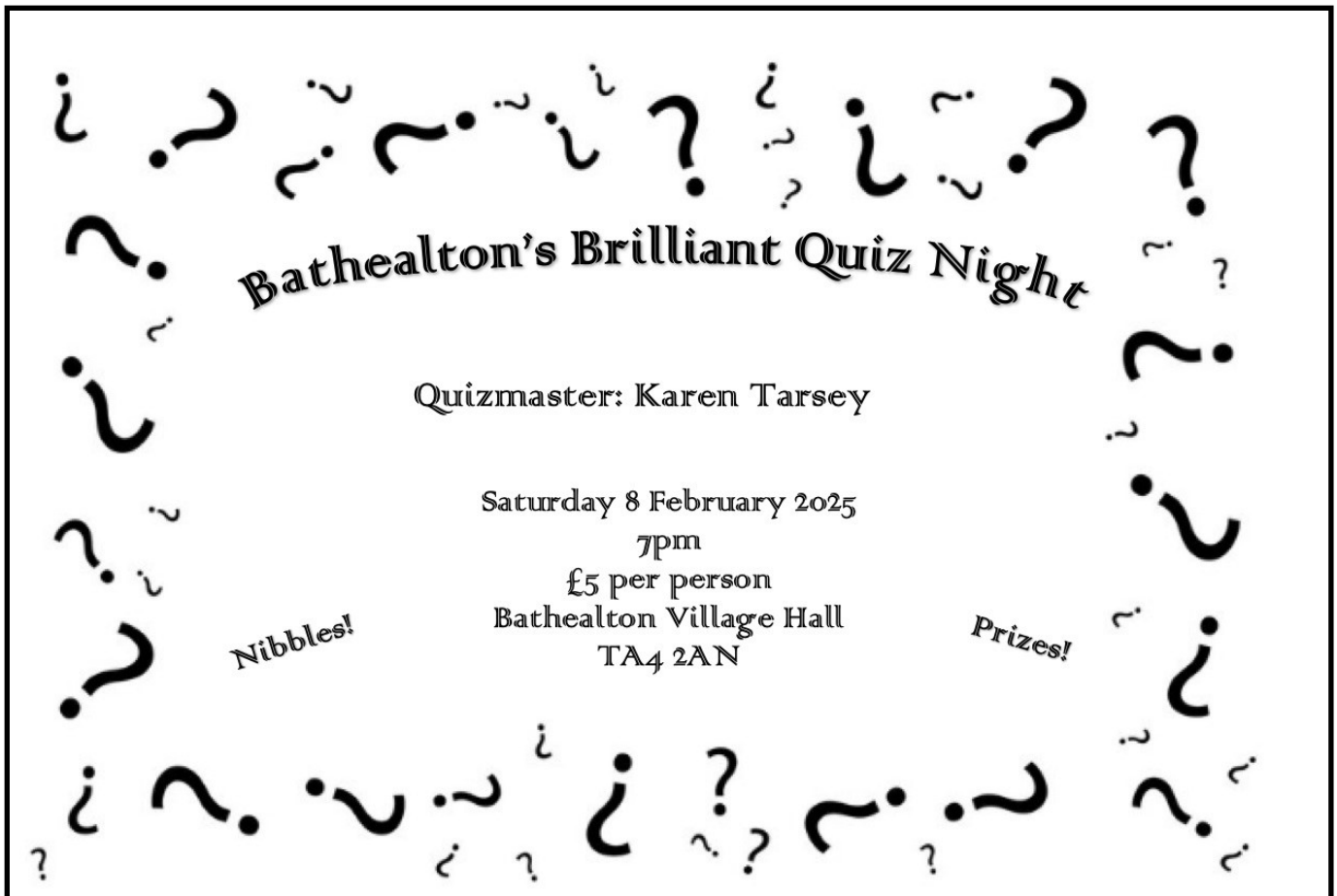


**CRICKET CLUB QUIZ NIGHT**

With Alan Rose as Quizmaster!  
Appley Pavilion

**FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY**  
7pm for a 7.30pm start

Max 6 people per team, £10 per person to include food. Bring your own drink  
All proceeds will go to A.S.C Cricket Club  
To book, text Suzette on - 07890 261387  
*(limited number of tables available!)*



**Bathealton's Brilliant Quiz Night**

Quizmaster: Karen Tarsey

Saturday 8 February 2025  
7pm  
£5 per person  
Bathealton Village Hall  
TA4 2AN

Nibbles! Prizes!

## Bathealton Parish Council Meeting held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Present:** Phil Broad (PB) Chair, Steve Cottrell (SC), Jess Bunn (JB) John Ridgley (JR), Adele Broad (AB). No apologies.

**Declarations of interests:** None

### Minutes:

PB welcomed people attending and apologised for having to move the day to a Friday as a new minute taker and temporary treasurer needed voting in. PB proposed for AB to carry out the role and this was agreed unanimously.

**Planning Application:** Silage barn application amendment 03/24/0003/CQ has been made. Comments to be emailed and sent to PB

### Financial Matters:

Balance on account	£2660.32
Payments approved:	
Hall hire/telephone box	£202.00
PCC graveyard maintenance	£350.00
Wivylink	£100.00
Homeless charity open door	£100.00

### Review of council budget including financial plan for 2025.

- The continued support of the defibrillator located at the village hall
- Continued maintenance of the churchyard
- Continued monitoring of the public footpaths, styles and signage
- Village hall hire
- Parish council indemnity insurance: AB to look at in relation to the relevance and services covered by this policy and the needs of the parish council

**Precept :** there was a vote on the precept and this will be increased next year to £2000; this was passed unanimously.

**Bridleways and footpaths:** It has been brought to the attention of PB that a bridle path is very overgrown and impassable, a request has been made by a member of the public that the parish council put some money towards the upkeep of this bridleway.

There was a discussion where several points were raised that we are a very small parish with three named bridle paths and many more footpaths. Somerset Council has withdrawn grants for the maintenance of footpaths and bridleways. The council members stated that at this present time they cannot offer any support for this maintenance.

PB will ring the party concerned and inform them of the Parish Councils decision.

**Transport links:** There is a petition online trying to have a bus route re-instated between Wellington to Wiveliscombe (via Milverton and Spring Grove) this would be a beneficial for isolated people to be able to get around the area easily.

This petition can be signed up for at [www.roundwellington.co.uk](http://www.roundwellington.co.uk)

**AirBand fibre rollout:** the instillation of optic fibre to Bathealton and several of the neighbouring villages has been pushed back by another three years because AirBand has pulled out of the contract. However, there is another possibility which would bring fibre optic broadband to our area much more quickly and this is being actively pursued by our County Councillor, Dave Mansell.

**AOB :** no further issues raised.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - 19.30 in Bathealton Village Hall. This will be the AGM .

*Adele Broad, Minutes Secretary*

### Rainfall Statistics (inches) for December 2024

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
6.28	5.04	5.71	7.20	2.40

Happy New Year to everyone! Didn't you miss something in December? You know, the wet stuff coming from above? December 2024 turned out to be the third driest since 2010 (1.31 in). The second driest was December 2016 with 2.2 inches.

And for those who love statistics, here are the figures for the last five years:

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
45.32	43.33	40.67	55.24	48.11

Will we ever get back to below 40 inches per year I wonder?

*Val Coots*

### Mobile Library

at Greenham Bridge

**Next visits:** 11th February and  
11th March 2025

**Note new time 9.50 - 10.10 a.m.**



# Waterrow Village Hall



## Quiz Night

**Friday February the 7th 2025 6.30 pm**

**Waterrow Village Hall, Waterrow - TA4 2AX**

**Quiz Teams - maximum of 6**

The meal is Chilli, jacket potato and salad with vegetarian option available. Followed as always by the excellent homemade dessert selections. Meal will be served at 6.30 pm. Please bring your own drinks.



**To reserve your table** please either email Liz using [liz@kilbride.org.uk](mailto:liz@kilbride.org.uk) with your name and team size or you can phone her on 01984 623431

**Priced at only £10.00 for adults £5.00 under 12s**

**We look forward to seeing you there!**





## The Kittisford Pudding Club

will meet at Springers, Kittisford

**Friday 14th February**  
at 7.00 pm

After a main course, all participants will have the chance to sample and mark a selection of puddings produced by our very talented Kittisford folk

*Tickets costing £15 (including the first glass of wine) are available from:  
Penny 01823 672216 or email  
pennystanbury@btinternet.com*

*Limited tickets so book early.*

*All proceeds are for Kittisford Church funds*

### **The great Blizzard of February 1978 as witnessed in the parish of Culmstock, Devon**

It was a Friday afternoon and I had the weekend off so decided to visit my father for the weekend; he lived at Almshayne in Culmstock.. Little did I know that I was to witness an historical event and would not return home until almost a week later!

A large mass of air of Arctic origin lay over Britain and the continent. Mild and moist air had gradually crept northeast into Biscay and west France during the week but could make no headway into the UK. It had made two attempts during the week resulting in snowfalls over Southwest England but each occasion the cold air had pushed it back. There had been no snow where I lived in High Wycombe and the latest fine mesh computer forecast for the weekend was for the cold air to keep the mild Biscay air at bay, resulting in a dry and sunny two days over southern England.

There was a little lying snow on Salisbury plain as I headed west on the M4 and the lying snow was patchy until Bridgwater. From there south-westwards the lying snow was extensive and became progressively deeper. The sky, although cloudless, took on a dark and ominous

look, with thick haze making the sun very weak. As I reached Culmstock I began to doubt the dry weekend that had been promised that morning.

It was Saturday, February 18th. We were thinking of going bird watching on the Exe estuary. However, at 11:40 some small flakes of snow began to fall so we quickly dropped the idea. Throughout the afternoon it snowed.

At about 5:00pm, I decided to walk up to Culmstock Beacon; the east wind was now fresh with some light drifting taking place. Occasional pockets of lying snow were being lifted from the field adjacent to the house and carried into the hedge. At 5:15pm I was up on the Beacon Ridge, the wind was much stronger up there and so much snow had been blown off the top that a four foot drift had to be waded through. With nightfall approaching I returned to Almshayne, where the wind was lighter but it was still snowing. By 8:00 pm conditions had changed drastically - the wind was now strong and substantial drifting was occurring. At daybreak on Sunday it was still snowing but only lightly and the wind remained strong to gale force. The landscape was now a new one to Culmstock. Where before there had been banks and hedges, there were now only minor boundaries between fields with everything covered in a white blanket.



During the news bulletin on Radio 2 at 7:00 am that Sunday, a blizzard in the West Country was mentioned and that it had caused some disruption. By 8:00 am the full impact of the storm had registered and Radio 4 made the blizzard the main news story. All roads in Devon were reported as blocked; Taunton and Yeovil were cut off.

I walked up to the M5 motorway bridge to see if there was any movement. The B road *en-route* was very variable with some places being relatively clear of snow due to the wind blowing it away, but most of the road was deep with snow, drifts up to the top of the hedges had formed on the east side of the road. One stretch of the B road was level from hedge to hedge with five feet of snow. In such places the only means of locomotion was to walk along the hedge tops.

The M5 was a whiteway with one abandoned car on Maidendown summit. As the motorway faced into the wind, the snow had been blown off the carriageways so that only a few inches of fairly level snow remained. There was no traffic to be seen, the blocked roads preventing access

That Sunday afternoon it started snowing steadily again. Still the east wind was strong to gale force. It snowed all evening as well but the wind did seem to be dying down slightly.

### **Monday morning**

Monday morning now, February 20th, at last the wind had died down and the snow had stopped overnight. This meant we must have had at least thirty six hours of snow falling with a strong to gale force easterly wind for most of that time. There was a thin coating of ice covering everything so there must have been some freezing rain at the end of the blizzard.

After this second night of blizzard conditions we could now survey a still more remarkable scene than the day before; only now with a light wind and no precipitation we could take our time to do so. The drift in the driveway was three to four feet deep and a four feet drift covered the patio; the lawn had two feet of level snow on it merging into four to five foot drifts on both roads. The lower road leading back to the main road had eight foot drifts right across it making locomotion almost impossible. The position on the main road was even more extreme than the day before with most drifts twice as wide and completely filling the road between the two five foot to six foot hedges.

### **Historical context**

I estimated that about three feet of snow had fallen, obviously impossible to measure directly. Conditions on this Monday morning were worse than in 1963 or 1947 and the most extreme in Devon

since March 1891 and perhaps since the great 'Lorna Doone' winter of 1684.

Five hundred snow clearing machines were in operation in Devon. The track to the local farm had six foot drifts in it and the farmer, Frank Hussey was snowed in, eventually being able to get out two days later. What would have happened in previous centuries when mechanised vehicles were not available?

### **The beginning of the thaw**

The mild air over Biscay had formed into a depression on Saturday which deepened and moved northeast to Cornwall and then slowly filled on Sunday. However the milder air won eventually as the anticyclone over Scotland slipped southeast

A slow thaw started on Monday, continued on Tuesday and became rapid on Wednesday. A drift of sixteen feet had formed on the Maidendown to Uffculme road, this being about the deepest around. Indeed the only limit to the drifts was the height of the hedges or steep banks. The road to Burlescombe was blocked as the Culmstock road was until Wednesday; it was also cut off for three days.

Wellington was a town with snow heaped four to five feet on the pavements, Wellington boots certainly came in handy in their hometown that week! By Thursday morning with the thaw now three days old, about two or three feet of snow had melted giving back to large areas of fields their green appearance.

However, this still left deep drifts and Oakhampton was not reached until Thursday and Lynmouth not accessed until Friday afternoon. I was eventually able to return to work on Thursday evening for my nightshift. The thaw resulted in widespread flooding, not unusual after heavy snow and a rapid thaw, caused in large part by drifted snow blocking the normal waterways.

As I write this one week after the blizzard there may still be some isolated villages cut off, although with a rapid thaw continuing they must soon be reconnected.

*Andrew Day*

This is an abridged version of events written in February 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> 1978 by Andrew Day who was then a meteorologist at the Met Office RAF Strike Command High Wycombe.

Andrew was a friend of the Sweet family of Stawley and very familiar with the Somerset/Devon border locality.

*We would love to hear of any personal memories of 'The Great Blizzard of 1978' from those then living in our immediate area. Eds.*

## Minutes of the Stawley Parish Council Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Parish Councillors present: Chairman, Paul Musgrove (PM), Olga Dawer (OD), Sarah Jones (SJ) and Pat Sweet (PS)

### Matters Arising not Covered Elsewhere

- The payment of £1,600 has been made to The Village Shop.
- Technological have been approached by the Chairman and it would appear that they are intending to expand their network south from Waterrow along the line of the River Tone. Some properties in the Kittisford area have been “leafletted” suggesting that they should register an interest in a fibre connection, should they wish.

We are still waiting for confirmation that the voucher scheme is operational. Some properties in Tracebridge have been told by their supplier that they may be able to apply for a fibre connection. The broadband situation is fluid at present so the Council will wait for further concrete news before any action.

### Defibrillator Maintenance

Ashbrittle Parish Council have spoken to Community Heartbeat and determined that we owe them for the VETS telephone (£100) and the defibrillator (£126) including VAT. It was agreed that the RFO should pay the invoices when they arrive.

There was concern that there was no defibrillator in the area of Stawley and the use of the VETS scheme had effectively been superseded by local WhatsApp and other informal groups. The Chairman will investigate the possibility of gaining a further defibrillator and leaving VETS.

### Finance

- The current bank balance is £1,976.51
- Savings. The Unity Trust Bank balance is £10,082.14
- The precept application for 2025/26 has been sent to Somerset Council.

### Planning

35/24/0010 Variation of Condition No. 07 (restriction on maximum length of stay) and removal of Condition No. 08 (restriction on permitted season of operation) at Gamlins Farm Caravan Site, Greenham Quarry Road, Greenham, Wellington.

The Chairman had visited the site and briefed the Council on his findings. The site has had some improvement works carried out and consists of twenty five spaces. The new owners have some experience of running sites and believe that they can only make the site profitable if is open for twelve months of the year. The Council does not believe that this would be detrimental to

the Parish and therefore supports this part of the application.

The second part of the application is to replace the condition requiring the site to be occupied by each caravan for fourteen days or less with one with no time restriction. The Council’s view is that a time restriction should remain but be for twenty eight days. Hence the new condition should be exactly the same as that already in place with fourteen days being replaced with twenty eight days. The Council supports this application with this change to the wording of the condition.

### Reports from Members

**Roads** – There has been an accident on the bends by Gamlin Quarry which suggests that there is a need for a salt bin there. The salt is of no use if there is no way of getting it on to the road. It was suggested that used supplementary feed buckets could be used. A request for them will be placed in the Parish News.

**Footpaths** – The 1955 definitive map has been delivered to Somerset Archives. The receipt will be placed in the online folders as this is a loan to the Archives.

**Any Other Business** – There is concern that the build on Rose Cottage, Tracebridge does not conform to the planning consent. This will be investigated.

The full minutes can be viewed at <https://stash.org.uk/>

*Paul Musgrove, Clerk*

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— THE —  
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## Galanthophilia- for the love of Snowdrops



As I write this, the first of my Snowdrops (*Galanthus spp.*) is starting to flower. In fact they started to show their nodding white buds around Christmas but have been waiting, with their heads bowed, for slightly better weather. I don't know the cultivar name of this early form, or indeed, from whence it came. Like many of the larger, earlier or more ornate Snowdrops in my garden, I don't have a definitive varietal name

for them - they have been gifted or I have picked them up over the years- but I care not, I love them all.

Without doubt, Snowdrops are the first heralds of the new year - they represent hope and purity. It is no surprise that they create such interest and, often, quite extreme fervor in some gardeners. Many rare and unusual forms can fetch eye-watering prices from specialist nurseries at auctions. It is the fine nuances of height, robustness, size and shape of flower, earliness or lateness of season and most importantly, the size, shape and density of the green markings on the inner petals as well as occasional green tipping on the outer petals that so enthuses Galanthophiles!

*Galanthus* is a small genus of around twenty species with over two thousand, five hundred listed modern cultivars. These bulbous plants are members of *Amaryllidaceae* (along with *Narcissus*) and are generally woodland edge and scrub inhabitants, native to southern and Mediterranean Europe, the middle east, from Spain to Turkey, from Iran through the Caucasus to Russia. They have been long cultivated and are widely naturalized in North America and Britain. Although considered a 'native' wild flower of England, it is now generally accepted that *Galanthus nivalis* (*nivalis* = 'snowy or snow-like') was introduced by the Romans and the first record of it 'naturalized' is from western Britain in the mid to late 1700s where the first 'double' (*plenus*) forms were noted.

Generally, the majority of cultivars found in gardens are bred or selected from four main species, *G. nivalis*, *G. plicatus*, *G. elwesii* and *G. reginae-olgae* with *G. ikariae* and *G. woronowii* also being well represented. The term 'Galanthophile' was allegedly coined between the wars by the plantsman, E. A. Bowles, in a letter to

a friend and fellow collector of bulbs but the selection and naming of very specific plants began with James Atkins, a nurseryman from Northampton in the mid 1800s after whom the tall, robust variety, *Galanthus 'Atkinsii'* was named. Then came James Allen of Shepton Mallet who by the end of the 1800s had hand pollinated then seed-grown over one hundred distinct seedlings from which the well-known forms *G. 'Magnet'*, *G. 'Merlin'* were selected along with *G x allenii*, though many of his other selections have been lost over time.

John Henry Elwes from Colesbourne Park gardens in the Cotswolds has *G. 'Elwesii'* named after him and Colesbourne houses one of the best collections and displays of Snowdrops that you'll find in this country. In more recent times, the rapidly increasing number of new cultivars (often, very oddly named - 'John's Y fronts' is one that comes to mind!) coming on to the market, the prices some specimens are commanding along with the mildly obsessive nature of some collectors ensures that this particular niche of horticulture will continue far beyond mere fashion!

### My own favourites from my garden are:

*Galanthus 'Marjorie Brown'* a tall, robust and late flowering form of *G. elwesii*, selected in 1987 with large flowers and wide, glaucous-green leaves.

*Galanthus 'Magnet'* a selection of *G. nivalis*, robust and a well-proportioned flower on a longer pedicel which shakes most charmingly in the lightest breeze.

*Galanthus woronowii* the 'green snowdrop' from northern Turkey into the Caucasus, a dainty species with wide, fresh green foliage. Simple and easy to grow.

*Galanthus 'Mount Everest'* another *G. elwesii* hybrid with large, well formed and solid flowers set atop wide, grey-green leaves. Easy to grow and bulks up quickly.

*Galanthus 'Lady Elphinstone'* a *G. nivalis plenus* (double) form with yellow markings instead of green on the petals. Can revert (the yellow marks can return to green) but often by dividing and replanting, they will settle back to their original colouration.

But in the final analysis, I'm entirely satisfied with seeing dense swathes of *Galanthus nivalis* (common Snowdrop) growing unrestrained under trees and shrubs poking up through ground cover, a harbinger of the promise of Spring and a sight that cannot fail to bring hope, optimism and fortitude to the soul, weary of winter.

John and Julie Ridgley



Dear farming & rural community,  
this is for you...



Designed by Wannapik

## Rural Fellowship

Events throughout the year to gather as a community, celebrate all that is wonderful in farming, share mutual concerns, and enjoy each other's company.

**A new initiative launched by your local churches in the West Tone Benefice  
with kind support by the  
Farming Community Network.**

Join us for a **free meal** at **The Globe, Appley**, to hear our ideas and tell us yours.

**7.00pm Thursday 27th February**

*To book your place please contact Revd Andy Barton at  
[welcome@westtone.org.uk](mailto:welcome@westtone.org.uk) by Monday 17th February.*

A decorative poster with a black background and white text and graphics. The poster is framed by a complex geometric border of white lines and diamonds. In the center, there are silhouettes of two horses facing each other. The text is centered and reads: "VILLAGE LUNCH CLUB ASHBITTLE VILLAGE HALL Thursday, February 27th at noon JAMES ROWSELL The owner of Ashbittle Stud will talk about WORKING WITH BEAUTIFUL HORSES BOOKING ESSENTIAL Delia Harling ~ 01823 672203 harlingdelia@gmail.com". There are also silhouettes of two horses in the bottom corners of the central area.

VILLAGE LUNCH CLUB  
ASHBITTLE VILLAGE HALL  
Thursday, February 27th at noon

**JAMES ROWSELL**  
The owner of Ashbittle Stud will talk about  
**WORKING WITH BEAUTIFUL HORSES**

BOOKING ESSENTIAL  
Delia Harling ~ 01823 672203  
[harlingdelia@gmail.com](mailto:harlingdelia@gmail.com)

## Christmas Bigotry

Bigotry. Hypocrisy. Integrity. Which quality do you value most, bearing in mind...

Bigotry is often called “principle”. Hypocrisy is hidden away behind an attractive image.

Integrity can lead to rejection and exclusion, often attacked by bigotry and hypocrisy.

I was thinking about a scene in the film “Scrooge”. Ebenezer was faced with the jolly Ghost of Christmas present; the Ghost opens his gown to reveal images of neglect and poverty.

The following poem came out of that thinking.

### Which Scrooge?

Grey, black and white the movie screen,  
Scrooge horror struck by fright  
before the Ghost of might-have-been  
with laugh and crown of light:

the spectre’s mood said all seemed well  
till pulled aside his robe,  
found hidden there, like pearls in shell,  
two orphans causing probe

in miser’s eyes and darkling heart  
to move his soul to guilt:  
was never change provoked to start,  
held down by meanness’ silt:

lacked he sweet charity’s concern,  
consistent state of self,  
would take no compromising turn,  
put humbug views on shelf.

Now move things round, say, inside out:  
the phantom’s quite two-faced?  
Of charity he likes to shout,  
with his good deeds well traced,

who likes the world to know his good,  
on his own trumpet blown:  
for great awards he’s often stood,  
acclaim he’s proud to own:

meant when he died, his funeral  
stirred crowds to flock to church,  
who cheered his good deed carnival,  
on glory’s throne to perch.

But there were those who stayed away,  
another man they knew:  
if heard his voice, they humbly say  
his presence they would spew:

their dreams he broke, tossed them aside  
beneath his pride above,  
to them spoke not, their needs denied  
while talked so much of love:

they lived in dark of public gown,  
ignored and ever spurned,  
his family in pauper’s town,  
on spit of sorrow turned.

In good or bad are people placed –  
which type do we prefer?  
Consistent miser? Ghost two-faced?  
Perhaps the two inter!

Looking at him, Scrooge was a bigoted man but he was consistent; humbug was his attitude and he didn’t change his stance. The hypocrite pretends, very sincerely, to be something they are not.

One of the reasons I admire Jesus so much is that, though judged bigoted and hypocritical by his enemies, he had integrity whatever the outcome regarding his own welfare. That is why he is remembered and valued today.

*Martin Perry*

## The West Field Wood – another year, more planting...

It is hard for us to believe that nearly a year has passed since so many friends, family, and people from the local community joined us in planting around two thousand trees near Stawley.

We are now in the midst of planning a further three days of planting from 31<sup>st</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February and again extend the invite to anyone who’d like to join us and lend a hand.

As a reminder, in 2022 three of us who love this part of Somerset (Adam, Kiran and Lawrence), set up a not-for-profit, community interest company called Wood Could Should. Whether you like the name or not, we hope that most people will support its aims:

- To plant as many trees as possible to absorb carbon
- To do so in a way that supports nature and is sensitive to the local environment (creating a wood, not a plantation)
- ♦ To end up with a resource that is accessible to the local and wider community with the intention that it benefits the locality as well as the planet.

With that in mind we have sourced all our trees locally – from Heydon Hill nursery – and have sought to use nearby suppliers and contractors for any work we’ve needed. We are planting native English broad-leafed trees and shrubs to create an informal woodland. And we invite you – our neighbours – to please feel free to visit the site at any time, and share any thoughts you have.

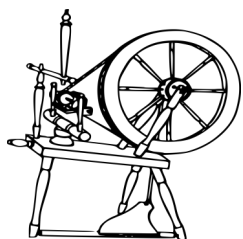
At our planting in 2024 we welcomed over forty volunteers, many of whom were from the ten parishes (and included several young children and some enthusiastic dogs). We were fed with delicious food made by Annalisa De'ath who lives just opposite the field, and who supplied hot and tasty home-made soup and rolls, a tray bake, and kept people plied with tea and coffee all day, as well as providing shelter in her comfy, upmarket garden room.

We'll be doing the same this year, so please do come along any time during the day from 9.00 am – no tree planting experience, or equipment, is needed as this is provided by our partner charity, **ProtectEarth**. And feel free to come along for just an hour or two, or even just to say hello.

If possible, please let us know you are coming by calling or messaging Lawrence on 07771 761800 or by searching for Wood-CouldShould and signing up on [www.Eventbrite.com](http://www.Eventbrite.com) Or do take a look at our website - created by Adam's wife, Andrea – [www.woodcouldshould.org](http://www.woodcouldshould.org). You can also just turn up on any or all of the Friday, Saturday and Sunday (if there are any trees left to plant by then) - the postcode is TA21 0HW, and the what3words location finder is:

*speakers.lawful.corkscrew.*

*Lawrence Simanowitz*



## Spinning and Woolcraft Group

Meeting arrangements will be confirmed in advance when the reminder email is sent out.

If you would like to join us please contact me and I will add you to the mailing list. Perhaps you would like to come along and learn to spin with us?

Or bring along your knitting, crochet or other needlecraft project. All welcome.

### Next Sessions

**Tuesdays:** 4th and 18th February  
4th and 18th March  
at 2.30pm

Contact Pauline: on 01823 672222 or email [pjw200355@gmail.com](mailto:pjw200355@gmail.com)



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*\*\* if you really love game pie then ring and reserve a place. Call Del on 07980994082, leave a message or send a text.*

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**5<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**

**10AM – 12.30PM**



## Ashbrittle Parish Council Meeting 13 th January 2025

Present: Charles Doble, Jeremy Robbins, Philip Wilson, Paul Leyland and Charlotte Westcott

### 1. Welcome to new Councillor Charlotte

### 2. Previous minutes and any matters arising:

The minutes were approved. PW confirmed the outstanding issue over the Heartbeat Trust invoice has been satisfactorily resolved.

### 3. Planning

JR confirmed all councillors were all responsible for their feedback on planning applications, and that APC only has an advisory role in planning.

CD said he thought the planning applications might now be going to PW. PW was unaware of this but said he would check.

### 4. Highways

CD asked if APC would fund the clearing of a roadside ditch near Heniton Hill. The contractor charges £350 per day and it was thought it would be easily achieved in less than a day. Everyone agreed this should be fine.

PW shared concerns that the budget could be over-stretched if this was one of many payments. This led to a discussion that the county council has implied that parish councils will become increasingly responsible for the maintenance of highways - PW to contact the County Council for more exact information.

PL said there was a page on the County Councils site for reporting potholes and said he would share it on the Parish Council Facebook page and parish magazine.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

### 5. Finance

PW Reported on the finances for 24-25, prior expenditure and budgeted items. There is still money itemised for repair and possible replacement of finger posts. It was agreed the the best solution was to simply repaint those posts in reasonable condition and leave the more modern plastic and aluminium posts. PL to advertise for a contractor on Facebook.

**5.1 Precept 2025-26.** The application for the new precept must be submitted by the end of the January. PW said our current spending exceeded the current precept due to support of the local shop provided by APC and other relevant PCs . It was discussed whether APC should consider raising the amount requested for 25-26 in light of the County Councils withdrawal of various annual grants and inflation. Two scenarios were looked

into which would have a minimum impact on the council tax payments in the parish. After discussion about rising costs and the role of the APC it was agreed by all that we should increase the precept in line with the 25-26 increase in State Pension of 4.1% to £2,395.00 and there was a need to develop a future plan for the APC over the coming year so next year's precept could be judged more accurately and set accordingly.

Everyone agreed that some form of parish plan was needed. JR to explore the historic record of such planning. CW will also look into what might be involved.

5.2 PL said that he had looked into the legalities of the council funding the church. He thought that the funding might be restricted to the churchyard and the clock as these are seen as community assets. CD disagreed with this and said it was dependent on interpretation. CD suggested that a 'Friends of the Church' could be created to help with future funding. Councillors were supportive of this idea. JR said there was already various friends of the church including flower arrangers and clock winders to consult along with others in the community. As one of the clock winders PL indicated that he would not want any broader responsibility.

PL noted it had been mentioned at the last meeting to bring together various community groups such as APC, The Village Hall Committee, and Ashbrittle Arts to consider how best to support the Church.

### 6. Date of next meeting - April 14th 2025.

*Paul Leyland, Minutes Secretary*

## Lunch Club

Our Christmas lunch club now seems like a long distant memory. Anthony Weeks talked about reindeer, both local and further afield. As ever he received an enthusiastic reception. This was followed by a traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, plus some extras. Jackie White excelled herself as usual.

Our next lunch club is on Thursday February 27th at 12.00 noon in the village hall. We are delighted that our speaker will be James Rowsell, the owner of Ashbrittle Stud. We are used to seeing beautiful horses in the surrounding fields or walking sedately on the road. James will explain the work of the stud and introduce us to the various seasonal activities.





My contact details for booking are: email [harlingdelia@gmail.com](mailto:harlingdelia@gmail.com) or telephone 01823 672203.

*Delia Harling*

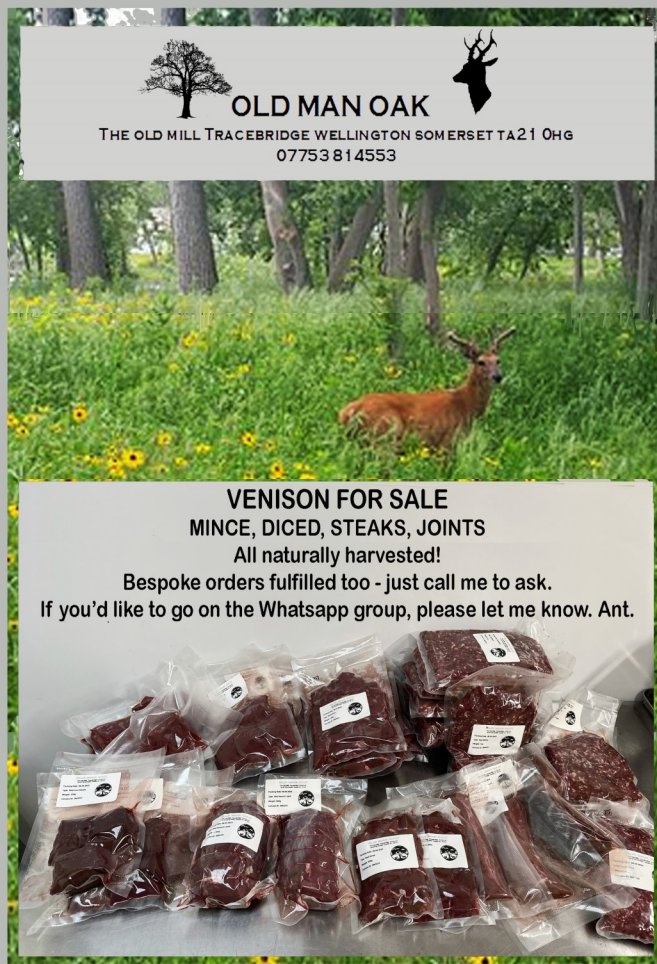




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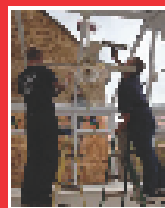
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## Defibrillators and The Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS)

### ASHBRITTLE & STAWLEY:

**01823 244104**

**BATHEALTON: 01984 322919**

**KITTISFORD, TRACEBRIDGE &  
APPLEY: 01823 245101**

The VETS numbers are available should you need assistance in an emergency or help to access a defibrillator. Remember, in the event of a possible cardiac arrest in your household: **ALWAYS DIAL 999 FIRST IN AN EMERGENCY AND, IF A CHANCE ARISES, THEN DIAL THE VETS NUMBER, SPECIFYING THAT YOU NEED A DEFIBRILLATOR RATHER THAN GENERAL HELP**

There are four local **defibrillators** which are easy to use and available to anyone. They are permanently located at these places and can be found using the //What3words codes below.

**Ashbrittle Village Hall**, on outside wall  
*blurts.flats.crouching*

**Bathealton Village Hall**, on outside wall  
*relatives.widgets.rolled*

**Kittisford New House Farm**, on wall,  
opposite church *bonkers.regime.lyricist*

**Stawley Shop**, on outside wall  
*messaging.servers.quaking*

These are all accessible 24 hours a day and no access codes are required.

### Editorial Policy

Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are the responsibility of the individual author(s) and are not necessarily the views held by the editors of the Parish News.

## Local Information

### Neighbourhood Watch Contact Numbers

Greenham & Tracebridge	Caro Ayre	01823 672603
Appley	Rachel Chesterton	01823 673063
Ashbrittle	Charles Doble	01823 672365
Stawley	Pat Sweet	01823 672380
Wellisford	William Thomas	01823 673143
Springrove	Doreen Orton	01823 400731

**Police non-emergency number 101**

### Police Beat Team

PCSO Brianna Whelan

Email: [brianna.whelan@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:brianna.whelan@avonandsomerset.police.uk)

### Parish Councils

**Ashbrittle - Chairman** Charles Doble 01823 672365 or 672618 Email: [charles@greenandcarter.com](mailto:charles@greenandcarter.com)

**Bathealton - Chairman** Philip Broad 07584 657106  
Email: [philip.broad1@outlook.com](mailto:philip.broad1@outlook.com)

**Stawley - Chairman** Paul Musgrove 01823 672627  
Email: [stawleypc@stash.org.uk](mailto:stawleypc@stash.org.uk)

### Community Halls

**Appley Pavilion and Recreation Field**  
– to book, ring Suzette Williams on 01823 672266  
or email: [williamspfa@outlook.com](mailto:williamspfa@outlook.com)

**Ashbrittle Village Hall**  
– to book, ring Pat Gainey on 01823 672760 or 07713 276656

**Bathealton Village Hall**  
– to book, ring Tilly Willis on 01984 624459

### Local Groups

**Stawley under Fives at the Appley Pavilion.**

Becky Allder Pre-schools Manager  
Swallows, Sampford Arundel 01823 672342 Mon/Tues  
Stawley Under Fives 07707 416871 Weds/Thurs/Fri

## PARISH NEWS DETAILS

**The Editors and the next issue deadline date are on the back cover.** Please send items for publication to the Editors in good time to ensure publication. There is only a short time between the deadline and the printing of the Parish News and late items may not be included. We are pleased to receive items in any form (typed, in long hand, or by email). Naturally, we prefer items by email [ashparishnews@gmail.com](mailto:ashparishnews@gmail.com) when they should be in Microsoft 'Word' format, as this saves a great deal of typing!

**Advertising** Our rates are £1.40 per month for a small box, £3.00 for a quarter page, £6.00 for a half page and £12.00 for a whole page. Advertising for community events, charity and church fundraising events in our area are normally carried free of charge. Occasional one-off adverts from residents in our area seeking to sell or buy an article or seeking to acquire or offer a service are also carried free of charge. In all cases the style, layout and size allocated to an advert is at the discretion of the Editors.

**Editors:** Maurice Stanbury 01823 672216 and Avril Silk 01823 672131

*e-mail address:* [ashparishnews@gmail.com](mailto:ashparishnews@gmail.com)

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**Printed** by Sharper Print Tel 07906 752190



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### *January 2025*

30th 12 noon Lunch Club in Ashbrittle Village Hall

### *February*

1st 7.00 pm 'Zeffe' - Gypsy Music and Dancing Ashbrittle Arts in the Village Hall

3rd 12 noon - 2.00 pm Pop-up Café - Bathealton Village Hall

7th 6.30 pm Quiz night in Waterrow Village Hall

8th 7.00 pm 'Bathealton's Brilliant Quiz Night' at the Village Hall

12th and 26th 10.00 - 12.30 pm Books, Biscuits, Coffee and Cakes at Stawley Mill

14th 7.00 pm Kittisford Pudding Club at Springers, Kittisford

15th 10.00 - 12 noon Coffee, Cake and Chat in Ashbrittle Village Hall

28th 7.30 pm Quiz night at the Appley Pavilion

### *April*

27th The Big Breakfast at Appley Pavilion

### *May*

10th 2.30 pm onwards Plant Sale at Hellings, Bathealton

10th From 7.00 pm Appley Pavilion 20th Birthday Celebrations

### *June*

7th 2.00 - 5.00 pm Stawley Church Garden Party at Stawley Mill.



*Enjoying lunch in the Bathealton 'Pop - Up' Café. left to right - Michael Kane , Lin Kane , Dennis Sheehan and Daisy Sheehan*

**Next Deadline Date: Friday 21st February 2025**

**Editors: Maurice and Avril**