

STEEPLE ASHTON

NEWSLETTER

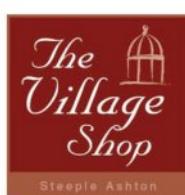
GREAT HINTON

MAY 2023



1809 Engraving by J Storer from a drawing by S Prout

A few years after its inauguration on 12 April 1973, The Friends of Steeple Ashton adopted the above image as a logo. This 1809 engraving not only distinguished the village, but also served as an illustration of its heritage – emphasising the main objective of the society: “To maintain the particular character and scenic qualities of Steeple Ashton”.



Steeple Ashton Village Shop

Opening Hours - please see page 7 for the current shop opening hours.

Shop telephone: 01380 871 211

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Editorial

Hello everyone - I was hoping to include photos taken on the 12th April at the 50th Anniversary lunch attended by 42 members of The Friends of Steeple Ashton in the village hall. Sadly, I don't have space this month. The Friends have a final meeting on 28th April and they are about to install a plaque on the wall of the Village Hall which commemorates the Polish community who came to the village after the end of the war.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting takes place this month on Tuesday 23rd May in St Mary's Church at 7.30pm. All those on the electoral roll are entitled to vote but anyone can attend - please do try and come to this very important meeting.

Helen

Newsletter Deadline for 2023

May 23rd; June 20th; July 18th (for August & September)

Items for the **next** newsletter should be received by **Tuesday May 23rd**. They should be sent to Mrs Helen Montague-Smith, 1A Butts Lane, Steeple Ashton or by email to **helenmontaguesmith8@gmail.com**

All published items solely express **the views of the author** and are the copyright of the author and the newsletter unless otherwise stated.

The Editor would like to remind you that it is up to you, the readers, to supply all news and copy for the newsletter. The sender's name and address need to be received before printing. Telephone 01380 871285.

Inquiries for advertisements in the newsletter should be made to **BrIDGET LEWIS** : email: adverts4steepleashton@gmail.com or 01380 871279

Please send your ads by email if possible.

Please note, we do not deliver flyers for advertisers.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Police Report

The Police Report for the Melksham area (March 2023) has now been released and has been published under the News section of the PC's website.

Parish Council Vacancies

At the current time the PC has four vacancies. We would welcome new recruits, particularly to make our council more diverse to better represent our village population.

If you care about your community, want to make a difference and get involved in some exciting projects, please contact me, Robert Leonard (871244) or our clerk, Nicola Duke (01373 864127), for an initial chat.

New members can be co-opted to the council through a simple vote, there is no need to go through an election process. You do need to be over 18 years old and have lived or worked in the parish for the past 12 months.

Planning Applications

The below listed planning applications were considered at the April PC meeting:

PL/2023/01767 - 32 ACRESHORT LANE, STEEPLE ASHTON, BA14 6HD - Application for internal alterations and proposed first floor extension and garage conversion to the existing dwelling at 32 Acre Short Lane, Steeple Ashton. The proposal additionally includes a new oak double garage - Objection on the grounds that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, due to the visual impact of the garage extension and removal of the hedge on the transition from the rural section of Acreshort Lane into the built environment of the village.

PL/2023/02415 - THE OLD PARSONAGE, VICARAGE LANE, STEEPLE ASHTON, BA14 6HH - T1 - Yew: To reduce Yew by 2m all over – No objection.

PL/2023/02148 and PL/2023/02642- LONGS ARMS, HIGH STREET, STEEPLE ASHTON, BA14 6EU - Replacement of derelict curtilage listed former stables building with timber clad storage barn - Support.

Wiltshire Council Planning Decisions

PL/2023/00840 - CHURCH HOUSE, VICARAGE LANE, STEEPLE ASHTON, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 6HH - T1 - Yew (TPO: 2016/00008/IND)

- trimming back by 2-3m of branches overhanging driveway - these are beginning to restrict high vehicular access, causing damage to other parts of the driveway and surrounds as drivers seek to avoid low hanging branches. Considerable needle, berry and branch fall is also creating significant rubbish and mud on the driveway in very short timing - Approve with Conditions

PL/2023/00980 - 11 ASHTON COMMON, STEEPLE ASHTON, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 6DY - To renovate an existing double garage including new roof covering and garage doors. Also, to position a new heating oil bunded tank - Approve with Conditions

Parish Council meeting dates 2023

The Parish Council will meet on the following dates, at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall:

Annual Council Meeting - Wednesday 3rd May

Monday 5th June – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Monday 3rd July – Full Council

Monday 7th August – Planning Only (if required)

Monday 4th September – Full Council

Monday 2nd October – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Monday 6th November – Full Council

Monday 4th December – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Parish Council Contact:

The Clerk can be contacted on 01373 864127 / 07971 987806 or email clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk. All Councillors have live @steeple-ashton.co.uk email addresses which are also posted on the website.

Find us on Social Media through the **Parish Council page**, we cover many topics of interest to our residents. There is also a Steeple Ashton **Village Discussion Group** and a group called '**Steeple Sells**' for those of you that would like to buy and sell things locally – these pages are not a part of the Parish Council policies or procedures, just a natural extension of social media activities. We would love you to get involved – search for 'Steeple Ashton' on Facebook. If you are a village group and need help with your social media or village event promotions, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk at clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk or 07971 987806.

Find us on the website at <https://steeple-ashton.co.uk/>

~~~ **www.steeple-ashton.co.uk** ~~~

## **She was good!**

On April 12th the village of Steeple Ashton received a marvellous demonstration! On display was an almost complete spectrum of British weather; brilliant sunshine gave way to rain, and hail, and exhilarating wind which blew the blossom from the trees, and thunder rumbling round the houses and still the ladies of the Wi attended the monthly meeting in force.

Because of the atrocious weather in the afternoon, a last minute check was made just to be sure there would be a speaker. Thankfully, Maureen Hilton arrived, good and early, under a mountain of flowers. And we were entertained! After a few minutes I turned to my friend and said, 'I knew that she would be good!' My friend replied, 'She's better than that!' And she was. She lulled us as she demonstrated with such ease an array of flower displays; her soft voice and her movements relaxed us all; although we were invited to speak we were hushed in awe. The information she gave inspired us all. Members made notes enthusiastically so that come summer the village will be abloom with lemon trees, date palms, chrysanthemum and carnations because we all know how to propagate them now from the snips taken from our own flower displays . Everyone agreed, 'she was good!'

The competition table was awash with flowers too - so many entries in the competition for an arrangement in a cup. It was very hard to pick a 'best', which members themselves now do (a button placed by the individual choice) but the prize went to Sue Mason-Pay for a pretty mix of flowers from her own garden.

All in all, it was a super evening.

**Rosie Brett Green**

## **Useful Information**

### **Postal Collections:**

**Longs Arms** - Weekdays - 4.15pm; Saturday - 10am

**Newleaze** - Weekdays - 12noon; Saturday - 11am

**Great Hinton** - Weekdays - 9am; Saturday - 7am

**Mobile Library Visits - Wednesdays;** Longs Arms - 11.00 - 12noon;  
Ashton Common Bus Stop - 3.35pm - 4.00pm  
May 3rd, May 17th, May 31st

## **NATURAL HISTORY CLUB**

The month of May brings (hopefully) warmer weather to trigger growth in plants and breeding in birds and animals. Although some birds start earlier to coincide with their preferred food choice emerging. We will have had our Dawn Chorus walk following the old coffin trail to Luffenham field by the time you read this. We should have seen and heard our arriving summer migrants including Warblers such as Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Whitethroat. Of course our resident birds will be in full song too.

Remember that these birds have travelled long distances to get here. Some from sub sahara and even South Africa. They will be tired to say the least and most will be insectivores. So if you can stand to have an unkempt lawn throughout May, resist cutting it for grasses and wild flowers attract insects which in turn provide food for these incoming migrants. Every month has a slogan and the month of May is 'No Mow May'

If you see a wild bird or animal in distress, there are a lot of caring folk in the village who want to help our wildlife when it needs it and one of the best points of contacts for this area is the Wiltshire Wildlife Hospital. Their contact phone number is 07850 778752. They are a team of dedicated volunteers and will offer advice on pretty much any situation. Their website also offers some invaluable advice:

<https://www.wiltshirewildlifehospital.co.uk/advice>

It is worth looking here first before calling.

We are a non-subscription village club and free to join so please come along to our next meeting if you have an interest in natural history or want to learn from local like minded people. We hope to have a short talk from one of our local beekeepers.

Our next meeting will be on : **Thursday 1st June at 7:30pm at the Methodist Church Hall, High Street Steeple Ashton.**

Don't forget, please report anything of interest such as sightings of animal / bird / insect activity or lack of. Or indeed unusual or rare plants or anything you can't identify to David Culverhouse, 01380 871621 42anchor@gmail.com or Roger Ferguson 01380 870860 r.ferguson550@btinternet.com If we can't answer your question then we probably have a member who specialises and can.

**Roger Ferguson**

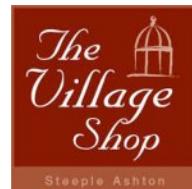
# **STEEPLE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOP**

**Normal Opening times:**

**Monday – Friday: 7.30am to 4.30pm**

**Saturday: 8.30am – 4pm**

**Sunday: 9am to 12noon**



**THE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE  
STEEPLE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOP  
TO BE HELD  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON  
FRIDAY 9TH JUNE 2023  
6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start**

All STASH shareholders are invited to attend –  
Refreshments will be available.

We remind you that the shop Annual General Meeting, which is open to all shareholders, will take place on Friday the 9th June (and not on the 6th as mentioned last month) in the Village Hall. If you would like to become a shareholder, please enquire with Julie in the shop.

We currently have two vacancies on the shop Committee which we are not intending to fill before the meeting as we hope there will be a number of nominations from people coming forward who are keen to join us - nomination forms are available in the shop.

## **Bank Holiday Opening Hours in May:**

Monday 1st May 09.00 - 12.00

Saturday 6th May 08.30 - 10.30

Sunday 7th May 09.00 - 12.00

Monday 8th May 09.00 - 12.00

Monday 29th May 09.00 - 12.00

**Caren Felton**

STEEPLE ASHTON  
METHODIST CHURCH  
INVITE YOU  
TO OUR  
PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH  
IN THE METHODIST CHURCH



ON SATURDAY, 20TH MAY 2023  
12 NOON - 2.00 PM  
SUGGESTED DONATIONS £10  
PROCEEDS TOWARDS OUR  
NEW AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT

## METHODIST CHURCH

This month we are looking forward to the Coronation of our new King. This is a celebration for the future of our country. We understand that our Royal Family want to update and move forward with modernisation.

At Steeple Ashton Methodist Church we too are trying to modernise. We are pleased to say that there is now broadband in the Church, and hopefully by the time you read this we will also have a modern audio visual system with loudspeakers and a projector. Our members are getting older and our needs are greater, so we have decided to splash out and improve the facilities for the good of us and all users of the building.

We hope these changes will offer a more pleasurable space for all users and for wider worship. So please share with me in the following prayer:

Thank you, God, for everything –  
The big things and the small,  
For “every good gift comes from God” –  
The giver of them all.  
And all too often we accept  
Without any thanks or praise  
The gifts God sends as blessings  
Each day in many ways.  
And thank You for the “miracles”  
We are much too blind to see.  
Lord, give us new awareness  
Of our many gifts from Thee,  
And help us to remember  
That the key to life and living  
Is to make each prayer a prayer of thanks  
And every day thanksgiving. *Helen Steiner Rice*

## Church Diary

All services are at 9.15 am unless otherwise stated. Please come along and join us. You can be assured of a warm welcome, and a time to chat, plus a cup of tea or coffee after the service. If there is anyone for whom you would like prayers to be said, please leave details in the post box at the front door, and they will be included in the Intercessory Prayers on Sunday.

## **April**

Sunday 30th 10.30 am United Sector Service – Clive Illman

## **May**

Tuesday 2nd 7.30 pm Housegroup

Thursday 4th 2.30 pm CAMEO

Sunday 7th 9.15 am Worship – Derek Gard

Wednesday 10th 10.30 am Reflections & Fellowship

Thursday 11th 2.30 pm CAMEO

Sunday 14th 9.15 am Worship with Holy Communion – Rev. Gary

Gotham

Tuesday 16th 7.30 pm Housegroup

Thursday 18th 2.30 pm CAMEO

Sunday 21st 9.15 am Worship – Izzie Smears

Wednesday 24th 10.30 am Reflections & Fellowship

Thursday 25th 2.30 pm CAMEO

Sunday 28th 9.15 am Worship – Rev. Craig Manley

## **C A M E O (Come And Meet Each Other) A Warm Space**

An open invitation for anyone who would like to meet others for a cuppa and a social chat from 2.30 – 4.00 pm on a Thursday afternoon at Steeple Ashton Methodist Church – All welcome.

## **REFLECTIONS & FELLOWSHIP**

A group who get together on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday mornings of the month, to look at parts of the Bible to see how it affects our lives. This is an informal group and not 'heavy'; and led by our own Izzie Smears. Feel free to come along and try it. Any queries speak to Izzie on 01380 870538.

**Sudan Coffee Morning:** is to be held in the Village hall on Saturday 19th August from 10.30am to 12 noon.

## **CATHOLIC NEWS**

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST TROWBRIDGE & ST BERNADETTE'S  
WESTBURY (incl VILLAGES).**

**PARISH PRIEST CANON TOM FINNEGAN**

TELEPHONE: 01225 752152

[www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk)

Diocese of Clifton Registered Charity No 1170168

**Please see below the usual weekly timings of our Masses:  
but please check newsletter for changes.**

### **St John the Baptist - Trowbridge**

#### ***Sunday & Weekday Masses:***

Saturdays 12noon & 6pm (Vigil Mass)

Sundays 10.30am

Monday/Weds/Friday 9am (First Friday  
of the Month 6pm) Tuesday 6pm

### **St Bernadette's - Westbury.**

Mass times will be:

Sunday 9am

Thursday 10am

### **Live streaming:**

All masses are streamed live on

[www.Churchservices.tv](http://www.Churchservices.tv) or on

You Tube 'Mass in Trowbridge'

### **Parish Newsletter:**

This is available weekly on the Parish website

[www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk)

### **Receiving Holy Communion from the Chalice:**

We have been advised that the Bishops Conference of England and Wales desire us to re-introduce distribution of Holy Communion from the Chalice as from Maundy Thursday where possible.

As you know, this was prohibited when we were able to re-open our Churches after the Covid lockdown in June 2020. Many may be hesitant to resume this practice and that is understandable. But the invitation to receive the Precious Blood of Christ will be offered.

**Ministry Team for the Benefice of  
North Bradley, Southwick, Heywood  
and Steeple Ashton**  
**www.threeinonebenefice.org**

**Fr Oliver Learmont** (Vicar)

The Vicarage, 62 Church Lane, North Bradley, BA14 0TA.

Tel. 01225 774845, 07464 795590

froliverlearmont@gmail.com

**Fr Tony Longdon**

Tel. 01225 754771 07951 703187

**Richard Havergal** (Licensed Lay Minister)

Tel. 01225 762668 rhavergal16@gmail.com

**Churchwarden of St Mary's, Steeple Ashton**

**Michael Moore**

Tel. 01380 870280

*The Pew News can be downloaded from the Benefice website.  
If you do not have access to the internet, do consider letting us  
have your postal address so that we can post/deliver you a copy.*

**Worship and Prayer in the Benefice  
in the month of May**

*All services scheduled below include a sermon or homily.*

**Sunday, 7th May**                   **THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

9.15 am     Holy Communion (CW)       St Nicholas', North Bradley

11 am       Holy Communion (BCP)       St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

11 am       Family Service                  St Thomas', Southwick

6.30 pm      Coronation Evensong (BCP) St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

**Tuesday, 9th May**                   **Feria**

9.30 am      Holy Communion (CW)       St Thomas', Southwick

**Sunday, 14th May**                   **THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

8 am        Holy Communion (BCP)       St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

10.30 am     Family Service               St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

with Rogation Sunday walk

11 am       Holy Communion (CW)       St Thomas', Southwick

|                           |                                                |                                     |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Thursday, 18th May</b> | <b>ASCENSION DAY</b>                           |                                     |
| 7 pm                      | Holy Communion (CW)                            | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton           |
| <b>Sunday, 21st May</b>   |                                                | <b>THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> |
| 9.15 am                   | Holy Communion (CW)                            | St Nicholas', North Bradley         |
| 11 am                     | Holy Communion (CW)                            | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton           |
| <b>Sunday, 28th May</b>   |                                                | <b>DAY OF PENTECOST</b>             |
| 9 am                      | Anglican-Methodist<br>Joint Ecumenical Service | Village Green, Steeple Ashton       |
| 10 am                     | Family Service & Baptism                       | St Nicholas', North Bradley         |
| 11 am                     | Holy Communion (CW)                            | St Thomas', Southwick               |

CW - Common Worship, Order 1 (contemporary language);

BCP - Common Worship, Order 2 (traditional language).

The Coronavirus (COVID-19). In consideration of those around you when in church, you are encouraged to continue **using hand sanitisers and take appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.**

\*\*\*

**Morning Prayer is normally said at St Nicholas', North Bradley, Monday - Wednesday. Further details are posted weekly in the Pew News and on the Benefice website.**

*"We lift up in prayer the people of our Benefice each morning; please let us know if you would like us to include in our prayers any particular person or cause." All are welcome!*

\*\*\*

**St Mary's is open for individual prayer during the day.**

*Please visit the Benefice website [www.threeinonebenefice.org](http://www.threeinonebenefice.org) for details of services, which may be subject to change - and for a range of information about the Parish and the Benefice.*

*And note that the Blog is now up and running !*

### **Other Notices**

#### **Headstones in the churchyard, St Mary's, Steeple Ashton**

A list of headstones that have been laid flat in St Mary's churchyard, was first published in July, 2021, together with the request for anyone

responsible for the maintenance of a headstone (heir-at-law) to notify us that a headstone should remain as it is, or to offer to fund its refixing. It has been decided that sufficient time has now elapsed for the receipt of any responses to this request; and permission (by way of Faculty) is being sought for the work already carried out.

Please also note that any repair or refixing of a headstone may only take place *after prior consultation with the Vicar, churchwarden and PCC*.

### **The Vicar, churchwarden and PCC.**

#### **Occasional offices**

For baptisms, marriage services and funeral services in church, please *contact Fr Oliver*.

#### **Vacancies for church officers at St Mary's**

There are currently vacancies at St Mary's for the role of churchwarden and PCC treasurer and PCC secretary.

*If you are interested in any of these roles, please contact Fr Oliver.*

#### **Concerts and other cultural events at St Mary's**

We welcome such occasions. If you are interested in using St Mary's as a venue, *please direct your initial enquiries to The Vicar*.

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**Dear All,**

In preparation for 6th May, the Church of England has produced a pocket-sized publication entitled Daily Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III: you may well have seen at St Mary's over recent weeks copies of this booklet together and an accompanying display. Each day over the four weeks that lead to the Coronation is given a particular theme, and opportunities are given to pray for The King, The Queen Consort and the Royal Family, the nation and the Commonwealth; to learn more about the symbolism and spiritual significance of the Coronation Service; and to reflect on the Servant King, Jesus Christ, who has been crowned in glory but who calls his followers to do the same.

Praying for the Holy Spirit is the theme of Day 13, and it is to be noted that, ever since the coronation of our king's namesake, Charles I, in 1625, the Latin hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* (*Come, Holy Spirit*) has been

sung when our monarchs have been crowned. The supporting scriptural text for that day is taken from John's gospel account of our Lord's appearance to the disciples on the evening of the first Easter Day: "Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' ". These words both take us back to the Last Supper when Jesus told his disciples that, after his departure from them, they would be sent the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, and forward to the Day of Pentecost, described in the book of The Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The themes in the booklet for each of the final nine days leading to the day of the Coronation are those qualities which Paul in his Letter to the Galatians calls the "fruit of the Spirit". The Spirit enables us to live in **love, joy and peace** with God, and gives us **patience, kindness** and **goodness** towards other people; and the Spirit produces faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our hearts and in our behaviour.

Whether it be for such a grand occasion as a coronation, for the solemnisation of matrimony, the service of confirmation or ordination, or the celebration of holy communion, we pray for the work of the Holy Spirit - first called to dwell in each of us at our baptism - and that his fruit may be manifest in our lives.

As we pray in the approach to the Coronation that the fruit of the Holy Spirit may be richly present in the life of our King, so towards the end of this same month, when we prepare for the Day of Pentecost, we pray that the Holy Spirit may be active in and for all of us.

The Holy Spirit was sent into the world so that we all might be one in Christ; and with that in mind I am delighted that, after a gap of a few years, the Anglican and Methodist church families in our village will be joining together in worship on Sunday, 28th May, in the heart of our community, on the Village Green, to pray and sing God's praises. Do join us if you can!

**Yours in Christ, Fr Oliver**

### **St Mary's Church, Steeple Ashton**

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd May at 7.30pm in the church. All those on the Electoral Roll are entitled to vote but anyone may attend the meeting.



Our '**Summer 2023**' meeting will be held on  
**Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup>**  
from **7:30pm**, in **the Village Hall.**

Entertainment to be advised – see details on posters mid-May  
Of course, it will also include the usual social, refreshments & raffle. No club to join, just come along...



**Entry £2**

**Upcoming SAGE outings:** All outings are self-drive or car share.  
If interested in joining one of these please contact [jennie.willis@btinternet.com](mailto:jennie.willis@btinternet.com)

Longstock Water Gardens in Stockbridge – Thurs. 11<sup>th</sup> May 23

Mottisfont (National Trust) Gardens in Hampshire – Thurs. 15<sup>th</sup> June 23

Do come and visit us at our stall at the upcoming **Garden Fair in the Village Hall on Saturday May 13<sup>th</sup>** – Gardenalia, Plants, Books

**Jobs to do this month:**

- \* Watch out for late frosts – protect tender plants when necessary \*
- Regularly pull or hoe off weeds \*
- Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs \*
- Water early and late to get the most out of your water, and recycle water when possible. \*

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2548517398732853>

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### 'Steeple Ashton Newsletter'

In May 1977...

#### A TRIP TO THE SOURCE OF OUR AERIAL NOISE

Nineteen of us assembled at the Guard Room at RAF Lyneham and we spent the first hour listening to Sqdn/Ldr. Thomas, of 38 Group HQ and asking him questions. We learnt that Lyneham is the largest RAF station in the world, with four squadrons (60 aircraft) of Hercules aircraft. Crewed by pilot, second pilot, flight engineer and load master, they are extremely versatile and suitable for strategic and tactical roles, with routes world-wide or just to Keevil. He explained how the air space is divided into 'motor-ways' 'main roads', etc. and how limited the choice was in finding dropping zones. Flying cost £1,000 an hour and Keevil was only ten minutes from Lyneham! The approach over Acreshot Lane had seemed unavoidable; but within the next two months there might be a change - Smoky Joe permitting! 38 Group had no jurisdiction over the use of Keevil by Army 'choppers' or RAF fighters.

S/L Thomas said that they had numerous applications from people to use the airfield but that they allowed only the Gliding Club and an annual event for the RAF Motor Cycle Club. Walkers were at risk of prosecution or, at worst, fatal injury. Sorry, chaps! Salisbury Plain was booked by the military twelve months ahead and the Army could only use Keevil for ground exercises by application to the RAF.

We could not believe we had spent an hour in the conference room when we were embussed for our tour, under the friendly guidance of Flying Officer Paul Wiggins. They regretted they hadn't a Hercules available to show us; but the Flight Simulator, where we spent some time in three small parties, was probably much more interesting and instructive, standing as it were in the cockpit flying over El Adem or Gan and being manipulated by a large computer!

After that, some of us saw the fire and crash service set-up (vehicles which consumed one gallon per two miles) and the Control Tower. All the personnel were most friendly and so patient in explaining the systems to us, meanwhile busy with their battery of telephones, radars, etc., controlling aircraft both in the air and on the ground, both of which we were able to watch during a landing. The flight controller had a console of switches controlling 3,000 lights on the aerodrome. Bird-scaring equipment also comes under his control.

By now it was after 10pm (2100 hours 'Z') and we went into the small control tower lounge for coffee and biscuits - but this wasn't the end. Back up to the top deck to see a simulated crash laid on for our benefit: four crash and fire vehicles and an ambulance careering along taxiways against a stop watch, beating the allowed time of one minute fifty seconds by sixteen seconds. A very impressive tail-piece to a really super evening. Just a pity we did not have our full allowable quota of twentyfive persons.

Friends of Steeple Ashton

The Friends of Steeple Ashton trip had taken place on Thursday 24 March, leaving the Longs Arms at 6pm. This report was written by Newsletter editor Dennis Hobson, as a member of the Friends. "Smoky Joe", as he named it, was the cement works chimney at Westbury. **David Berrett**



**St Mary's Church**  
Steeple Ashton  
*Concert*



*Friday 19th May 2023  
7.30 pm  
Tickets £10 from the Village Shop  
or £12 on the door*



*Registered Charity no. 1088639*



**Update April 2023**

## **Recap**

Over 220 questionnaires completed by villagers. A range of potential housing sites have been put forward by villagers/land owners.

A Steering Group has been set up from a variety of village volunteers, to help make the Neighbourhood Plan happen.

## **Where we are so far.....**

The Steering Group has met and looked at the outputs from the questionnaires. There are a lot of ideas, suggestions and feedback, and to understand it all, we have split the data up into 4 sections;

- Environment & Heritage – what is important, to be protected, history, environmental
- Housing – what we need, where and type
- Infrastructure – utilities, roads, facilities
- Social – what makes the heart of the village

## **What the sub groups are doing.....**

- Each sub group has a couple of Steering Group members and they are looking into the data in more detail.
- From this they will present back to the Steering Group;
- o The key areas that we can use to scope the Neighbourhood Plan - June/July
- o Areas the Parish Council see as day to day business – they will own
- o Good ideas to be implemented outside of the Plan – by villagers
- o Areas that are totally outside of a Parish responsibility

## **Housing sites**

There are over 20 sites that have been put forward for potential housing. The first stage is to review them against standard set criteria, and this will be done externally by registered housing consultants. The process will exclude some sites as not being suitable for various reasons; location, restrictions, infrastructure etc. When we have the shortlist we will be able to share with the village – probably late summer.

**The Neighbourhood Plan is a CONSULTATIVE PROCESS - with input and involvement with villagers along the way.**



Saturday 10th June  
2.30-4.30pm  
*Afternoon Tea*  
and croquet on the lawn  
*at The Lodge*



Tickets £10 per person available at  
the Village Shop. Cake stall and  
Raffle



## Steeple Ashton Coronation Picnic

**1.30-4.30pm Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May  
St Mary's Playing Field**

Pack up your picnics and join us for an afternoon of music and fun!

- 🎵 Live music from Adrienne & Paul and The Miller Brothers 🎵
- 👑 Children's homemade crown parade
- Tug of War Competition
- ⚽ 5-a-side Football Tournament (TBC)

All under 16's receive a free Coronation Gift!\*

\*to obtain your child's gift please pre-register by emailing: [SandieLewis@live.co.uk](mailto:SandieLewis@live.co.uk)

Please note: This event will only proceed as weather permits  
No glasses are permitted on the field. Please use plastic or paper versions.



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Saturday 8th July 2023

10.30 till 1pm



*Steeple Ashton Village Hall*



**The Coronation of Their Majesties  
KING CHARLES III & QUEEN CAMILLA**



Hello Everyone

Well by the time you receive this Newsletter, this historic celebration, for some of us a once in a lifetime occasion, will be almost upon us. The Village Hall will be decorated appropriately and the village will be awash with bunting prior to the big day. (Continued on p????)

The hall has recently been used for meetings about the Village Coronation Celebration Picnic in St Mary's Field on Sunday May 7th. Gill Aldridge and Sandie Lewis, along with their band of helpers are working very hard to put together a wonderful afternoon for the whole village - look for the

notices on Facebook and around the village, it's not to be missed!

Part of the celebrations will include a childrens' crown parade, where they can show off the beautiful crowns they have made. We are holding a CORONATION CROWN WORKSHOP in the Village Hall on Saturday 29th April 10.30 - 12.30, where children can decorate their crowns. We will be supplying various types of crown and lots of gems and bling required to make them individual and beautiful!

Young children must be accompanied by an adult as although there will be a few of us there to help with the decorating and to ensure everyone has what they need, unfortunately, we are not DBS checked and cannot be responsible for the children present. But it should be a fun morning and hopefully the children will enjoy being all together to create something for this historic occasion. Biscuits and cold drinks will be provided.

Since last month we have a new regular class at the hall. Lisa Lamb has brought her Flexible Strength class to Steeple Ashton at 9.30 am each Tuesday morning. It is a great class, using stretch bands to help with resistance during strength exercises and helped along by music. Some yoga moves are included for flexibility and balance and the class is part mat based and part standing. Lisa is very knowledgeable and leads the group expertly and we leave feeling we have worked hard but improved our mobility, strength and balance, something which is so very important as we get older. That's not to say this is a class just for older people! The age range is from 30 somethings to 80 somethings and everything in between!

Following our AGM last week (attended by 4 villagers - thank you!!), the Village Hall Management Committee comprises:

Clive Little                      Chairman

Francesca Buffery-King        Vice Chairman

Francesca Buffery-King        Treasurer

Marian Little                    Secretary

Sandra Stevens                 Booking Secretary

Geoff Hyatt, Bryan Berrett, Sandie Lewis, Justine Grace

Tony Evans has decided to stand down but we would like to thank him wholeheartedly for his help while on the committee, especially in the decorating of the hall.

**Marian Little**

**BOOKINGS:** Sandra Stevens 07827 291945 or email:  
[steepleashtonvh@hotmail.com](mailto:steepleashtonvh@hotmail.com)

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES:** Marian Little 01380 871161 or  
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## A HEADS UP FOR OUR JUNE CONCERT, and a reminder about the May Choral Workshop

We've been waiting a long time for this, but finally we can let you know that the extraordinarily talented and charismatic pianist **Martin James Bartlett** will be performing in the Priory Church on Saturday 24th June at 7.30pm.

Having won the BBC Young Musicians competition in 2014, he has gone on to fulfil the promise of a glittering career, performing all over Europe and making a number of recordings which have received brilliant reviews. He combines flawless technique, adventurous and wide-ranging musical tastes, and huge emotional depth to produce performances which are remarkable on many levels.

His programme for us is mostly, but not exclusively, French: Couperin, Debussy, Rameau and Ravel, interspersed with Haydn and Schumann/Liszt. This will make for a delicate and expansive evening's music, entirely appropriate for a midsummer concert.

Full details are on the Edington Arts website, and you can secure your tickets, still at 2014 prices, by ringing Chrissy on 01380 831256 or emailing [sue@edingtonarts.org](mailto:sue@edingtonarts.org); £20/15/10, and 18 and unders come free.

Don't forget also about the 2023 Choral Workshop with Jeremy Summerly on May 20th, when we will be learning, and learning about, Spirituals. Full details are on the Edington Arts website, [www.edingtonarts.org](http://www.edingtonarts.org). There are still spaces available for all parts.

## **Bryan writes...**

### **The Friends of Steeple Ashton: 1973 – 2023**

#### **Reflections on a 50-year history**

By the time this issue of the Newsletter is in circulation, the disbandment of The Friends of Steeple Ashton will have taken place – at their final AGM on Friday 28 April. I therefore thought it fitting to write a few words of reflection on its 50 years of existence.

The Friends of Steeple Ashton came into being during a time of rapid social and economic change in this rural community. Previously, with the military activity created after the construction of Keevil Airfield ‘on the doorstep’ in 1939, and the later accommodation of displaced families and Polish refugees, Steeple Ashton had already experienced dramatic changes during, and after the end of World War II.

Following the economic recovery of the 1950s and 60s, and the phased opening of the English section of the new M4 motorway from London to south Wales – reaching as far west as Swindon by December 1971 – another new chapter was heralded.

Nationally, average new house prices had risen from around £2,500 in 1960 to around £4,000 in 1970. By the mid-70s there was talk of the “£10,000 semi”; by 1980 average prices had reached around £20,000!

Here in Steeple Ashton, properties were selling at prices above the national average. Through the late 1960s and into the early 1970s these rocketing house prices resulted in increased planning applications within our parish, and with the west country becoming more accessible from London and the home counties due to the gradual westward extension of the M4, the village saw a rise in new residents.

During this period, some villagers considered that recent planning applications had not been given due consideration by those serving on the Parish Council – especially in regard to Steeple Ashton’s historic character and architecture. Also, views were expressed in the Newsletter with the common theme that there was, as then-editor Dennis Hobson commented in the March 1973 edition, a “reluctance to trust decisions to elected or nominated representatives” on various village committees. These included the Parochial Church Council (replacement of east window in St Mary’s), the Village Hall Committee (regarding a new hall), and of course, the Parish Council regarding “new housing and planning generally”.

Consequently, on 14 March 1973 an informal open meeting entitled “Discussion of Steeple Ashton Village Problems” was held in the Village Hall at 8pm. Chaired by Dennis Hobson, around 50 people attended, including Lord Richard and Lady Margaret Long of Steeple Ashton Manor.

During this meeting, it was decided by a show of hands that the Parish Council “should be supported in the preservation of the village by a body which would be solely concerned with this aspect of our community life”, and that a further meeting should be held “to form a society for this purpose”. But not all were in favour. The Newsletter report of the meeting described how some thought the formation of such a society would “split the village down the middle” or “disturb this happy (village) family”, believing that “old and new residents” would “move into opposing camps”. Yet despite these concerns, the voting was 30 in favour with no objections.

A meeting was arranged for Thursday 12 April 1973 – at which The Friends of Steeple Ashton was inaugurated. Lord Long was made President, and the objects of the society were laid down in the constitution as follows:

(a) To maintain the particular character and scenic qualities of Steeple Ashton.

(b) To work with the Parish Council, the District Council, and Local Planning Authority and any other interested bodies to preserve the beauty and architectural interest of Steeple Ashton and to ensure the careful integration of new buildings, where necessary, into the existing picture.

(c) The furtherance of knowledge on all matters relating to these objectives.

Annual subscription was set at 25p per individual and 50p per family. By the end of 1973 the Friends had 39 members, and the society had become a member of the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Civic Trust. Ken Rogers of East Town, who was Deputy County Archivist at the time, had been offered and had accepted Honorary Membership.

Along with monitoring and scrutinising planning applications and county plans, the Friends began promoting, instigating, organising and producing a range of events, projects and activities. By April 1974, total membership was around 74.

During the early days of this new village society, subscribing

members were unjustly referred to by some as “the posh and the new”. These opinions were unfounded, as there was a good representation of long-standing village residents subscribing, on the committee and attending the various Friends of Steeple Ashton events and meetings.

Through the mid-1970s the Friends flourished – and over the decades, in addition to studying proposals and planning applications, its activities would be many and varied. Here are just a few examples from down the years:

Lectures and guided village tours by Ken Rogers.

Recording existing Listed village properties and recommending new additions to the National Heritage List for England.

Raising concerns with Westbury cement works over fumes emitted from their 400ft chimney (mothballed in 2009 and demolished in 2016).

Recording and encouraging the use of local footpaths and publishing various short walks around the village.

Planting trees along the east side of High Street (north and south of the field gate opposite the junction with Sandpits Lane).

In conjunction with Steeple Ashton Youth Club, an on-site search to locate the position of the hidden foundations of the Anglo-Saxon Coople Church on the perimeter of Keevil Airfield (result inconclusive).

Contributing to Village Appraisal consultative documents to guide planning decisions.

Publication of ‘Village History & Guide’ (based on a discarded 1964 paper by Ken Rogers, discovered in the Hey Library over the church porch).

Trips to places of interest – including the chalk streams of south Wiltshire, and a visit to RAF Lyneham (during which the fire trucks were scrambled and the flight simulator was demonstrated.)

Countless talks, exhibitions, slide shows and presentations in the Village Hall – including illustrated talks on village history, guest speakers from the MOD and other organisations such as Planning Authorities, plus ‘Spooky Ashton’ (an illustrated Halloween show of Steeple Ashton ghost stories), and ‘Finding Sanctuary’ (an illustrated history of The Sanctuary in Dark Lane North, abandoned and at-risk at the time).

Last, but not least, when the lease on Luffenham Meadow became vacant in 2005, the Friends responded. Their efforts to develop and

manage this meadow of around 2.5 acres as a viable amenity for all to enjoy have been highly successful – culminating in the restoration of its 200-year-old stone footbridge and the planting of several small copses of native trees.

With the advent of the internet, planning applications can more easily be accessed by the general public. While it may be true that there is now no need for an organisation such as the Friends to scrutinise these plans, the diverse spread of other services this society has provided for our community over the past 50 years will be sorely missed.

In particular, the management of Luffenham Meadow. While the right-of-way across the field via the footpath will remain, with no new organisations having offered themselves as tenants to date, the sustainable management of Luffenham as a wildlife sanctuary and nature amenity for the village may be lost altogether.

Lastly, at the time of writing, I, for one, am looking forward to the very last talk to be hosted by The Friends of Steeple Ashton, in the Village Hall after their AGM on Friday 28 April. Presented by professor and author Gordon Lewis, it is entitled 'Imber – seven miles from any town'.

The Friends' final act will be to deposit its archive material with the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre at Chippenham. **Bryan Berrett**

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## **Keevil CofE Primary School - Latest News**

This month a number of village children experienced their first trip away from parents and carers with an exciting residential school trip.

Year four children from Keevil Primary School headed off to the Brecon Beacons, staying in the Danywenallt Youth Hostel and undertaking activities led by staff from the National Parks Authority.

The activities centred around the wildlife and geography of the National Park. This included a treasure hunt, survival challenges, and a tough 4.5 mile hike (learning navigation skills along the way).

Head teacher Lindsay Hermon praised the children's resilience in the face of very wet and stormy weather, "The children met all of the challenges thrown at them with an incredible spirit. Through taking part in activities outdoors that challenge them to move outside of their comfort zone, we find that the children develop real resilience and self-belief, which translates into increased self-esteem and better learning behaviours back in school.

"Keevil School undertakes this and other residential and outward bound activities, as we believe in the importance of developing fully rounded children.

### **Book share library**

In other news, the school would like to invite the local community to make use of the school book share library.

The book share is the result of an 'up-cycle' project by the school. The old rabbit hutch has been refurbished and weather-proofed and is now positioned on the corner of Church Lane, behind the railings. It is accessible to everyone through the unlocked gate at any time.

Come along and choose some books, and return them when you have read them for others to enjoy.

If you have books you would like to donate they can be placed in the hutch or dropped into the school's reception for us to check and restock the library. We would be grateful if donated books are current novels in good condition and modern children's books.

There is also a collection point for recycling pens and printer cartridges, which helps raise funds for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. There are collection baskets for these inside the book share hutch (we cannot take used toner cartridges).

Both of these recycling initiatives have contributed to the school's Green Tree Gold Award and hopefully help the Village to reduce waste, and support such a worthwhile charity in the process.

## **Steeple Ashton Recreation Working Group – consultation coming soon!**

Following last month's summary of what the rec group has been working on, we will be launching a consultation about St Mary's in May.

### **What's the consultation about?**

We've developed three outline options for a range of sport/play/leisure facilities at St Mary's field. These are indicative, absolutely nothing is set in stone, but we want to show some ideas of what could be done in this space – and hear what you like and don't like about them.

### **When is it?**

The consultation will run from early May until mid June.

### **Where can I find the survey?**

There will be a short online survey and paper copies in the shop (other locations to be confirmed).

Look out for updates when the survey launches in early May - on village noticeboards and the village Facebook page.

We'll also be at the coronation event on 7 May with the options on display and surveys available. We'll then work with different village groups to help distribute the surveys.

We'd love to get a high number of responses, ensuring we've heard from as many villagers as possible, across all age groups and with different interests, so that the final plans represent what a majority of villagers want and will use, now and in the future.

### **What will happen next?**

The consultation is an important step. Once we have collected views from the village, we'll develop a final plan for the parish council. We'll then need to apply for the funding required to start bringing the plans to life.

### **How can I help?**

If you're interested in getting involved with this exciting project for our fantastic village, we'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch by email at [sarecgroup@gmail.com](mailto:sarecgroup@gmail.com) or via the Parish Council if you don't have email.

**Rachel Pearson**