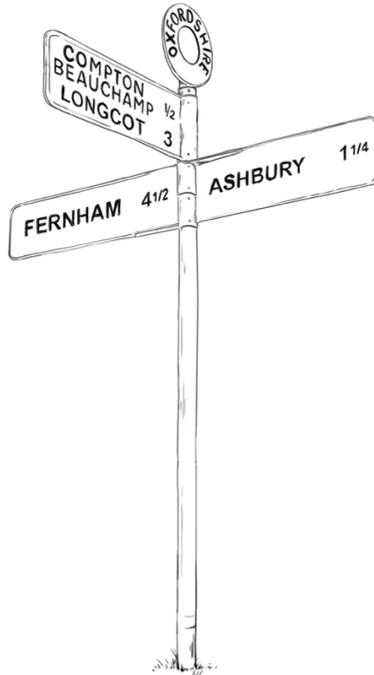


ASHBURY COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM NEWS

JUNE 2020



**Thought for the month: A view from across the Pond
Village Green
Country Matters**

Online at ashbury.org.uk, on the Community Facebook Page and (in limited numbers) at the bus shelter, as last month.

Thought for the month

Greetings from Rhode Island, USA. I hope you are all keeping well.

I've had a few people ask me what it's like being in "lockdown" here and how it compares to home.

Funnily enough, I was pondering the differences between life in the US and life in the UK before covid-19 repainted the landscape for all of us, everywhere. One thing remains true regardless of whether life is "normal" or not: "life in the US" is not a concept any more than "life in Europe" is for people in the individual countries. Covid-19 really emphasises that reality.

Whatever the President may say in interviews, it is each state's Governor who decides how to handle the pandemic. In Rhode Island, we have rules that sound to me quite similar to what you are all experiencing at home. We're meant to stay home with certain exceptions such as food shopping, getting exercise, and so on. We are supposed to wear masks and maintain 6 feet of distance (2 meters) from other humans. Other states have different rules. Some seem to be a bit like Sweden in their outlook. Rhode Island is one of the stricter states, and even has border checkpoints.

But I suspect the biggest difference, from what I hear from friends in the UK, is individual attitudes. One thing I have observed here is a kind of anger and sense of entitlement. By that, I mean people seem to be *offended* by the virus, as though it is an aggressor stepping on their right to good health. Some have even formed conspiracy theories.

There are protesters who demonstrate against the restrictions. They present science as they see it. The Governor and her health advisors present their scientific rebuttals. Who can know? Conflicting information abounds. Without a central body taking control over response to the virus and providing fact-checked science to the public, only time will tell which responses worked and which didn't.

Yesterday's news covered protests at the Rhode Island State House. The protesters were arguing in favour of herd immunity. They want schools and churches to re-open. "We have the right to worship", said many signs.

I feel terrible for those who can't have the kind of funerals they want for their loved ones, whose weddings and baptisms need to be postponed. It must be hard. I feel for clergy trying to hold it all together – and I think they're doing a brilliant job.

But, in my opinion, no one has lost the right to worship. It's right there, inside us. It's there in our homes, it's there in our gardens. We can worship any time. We can reflect, meditate or pray any time of the day or night.

Yes, many of us miss the community of church. We miss singing together, praying together, being in the buildings that have heard so many voices over time.

We are all missing some form of community. Countless people are separated from loved ones and friends. But at the same time, creative ways to form 'virtual communities' have sprung up quite quickly.

We can worship in a group. We can even sing in groups. We can see and talk to our distant loved ones. Is it ideal? No, but it is something. Something we wouldn't have had if this had happened twenty years ago.

Gail Loose

Views expressed in "Thought for the month" are those of the contributors

Ashbury News

Doggy business: Please do not take dogs into the 'new' graveyard but leave them tied up at the gate. The reasons are obvious. Thank you.

Two rather contradictory reports next; perhaps those responsible are walking their dogs around the church and other footpaths now rather than the Village Green?

Ashbury Parish Council Update

A resident's comment: I don't have a dog but am a dog lover. Dogs fouling footpaths has certainly got worse during this lockdown period. I met a dog walking couple the other day who warned me about the path behind the church (they had a dog!) and it was pretty bad. Please can people bag it and take it home or at least kick it off the path into the field. Don't they realise the danger of toxocara virus for children?

The Village Green

It's super to see more and more people enjoying the Village Green! Many thanks for all the positive feedback. It makes the effort worthwhile!

People have been asking the length of the path round the Green so that they can work out how much exercise they are getting when they walk or run round it. I've done a rough measurement and it's approximately 700 metres – just over a third of a mile.

I'm delighted to say that the Keep the Green Clean campaign we launched in April is working well – so far at least. We've been checking the whole area most days for the last month and so far have found no dog poo at all. This is a brilliant result and I'd like

to say a big “thank you” to everyone who has played a part. The important thing now is to keep it up so that the Green is a safe place for all of us to play, exercise and relax. We're watering the trees every other day in the dry weather and almost all are doing well. We've only lost one so far – a hawthorn (number 51) sadly broken by strong winds. Thank you to those who let us know it was in trouble, and sorry that we were not able to save it. A replacement is on the way.

We've ordered an information board with a map of the trees where we shall also display the dedications by people who have sponsored trees. Delivery has been delayed because of the lockdown but we're hoping to get a date soon.

As soon as restrictions on outdoor games are relaxed we'll get the playing field up and running. A volunteer has very kindly offered to mow the field in between the regular visits by the Parish Council maintenance contractors – this will help the grass grow strongly as well as keeping it short. If anyone has any suggestions about how to mark the field so that we don't need to do it again after each mowing, but also so that it doesn't get in the way of the mowers, please get in touch.

Liz Derrington

Ashbury Parish Council Village Green Subcommittee
(elizabethderrington45@gmail.com or 01793 710813)

POST OFFICE, at Rose and Crown

The pop-up Post Office has re-opened at the Rose and Crown, as before, on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.30 am - 11.30 am. Greeting cards and other items, plus birdseed and other avian treats!

Across the villages

Oxfordshire's seven Household Waste Recycling Centres have been shut to waste delivered by the public since 24 March 2020, following Government's direction that everyone should stay home due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In line with Government guidance, sites will reopen on 18 May with new site rules to ensure social distancing and the safety of residents and site staff. Trips should only be made for waste that cannot be stored at home, or which would cause harm to health if stored.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/limited-reopening-of-oxfordshires-household-waste-recycling-centres-FAQs>: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastereopenquestions

Church Matters

Church services

We will continue to livestream services during June. UpToDate information is available on our Facebook page but in brief:

Sunday Holy Communion at 11am

Tuesday Morning Prayer at 9am

Thursday Matins (BCP) at 9am

There is also

The Prayer Course Wednesdays at 10.30 by Zoom

Worship & Praise on Friday 19 June, also by Zoom

You don't need a Facebook or YouTube account to join us. A "How to" guide is available on the services page of the benefice website – or contact Rev'd Fergusson for further information: 01793 784338 or vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Although our buildings are closed,
our churches still rely on donations to stay active and provide care and pastoral support to everyone.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all those who already make a financial contribution towards our mission and ministry and the upkeep of our buildings during this difficult and uncertain time.

If you would like to know more about supporting us, please telephone our Treasurers on the numbers below.

Longcot and Fernham 01793 783324

Compton Beauchamp 01793 710889

Ashbury 01793 710208

If you would like to make a text donation, please to use the numbers below.

For Ashbury

Text STMARYS 5 to 70085 to donate £5

For Longcot and Fernham

Text LONGCOT to 70085 to donate £4

Your standard text message rate applies

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home
Remember those who must choose between
Preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for
Our children when their schools close
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money
In the tumult of the economic market
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,
Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically
Wrap our arms around each other,
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace
Of God to our neighbours. Amen.

Blessings

Norma

In common with all churches, **Longcot Chapel** is sadly closed for now. In the meantime, be assured that everyone in Longcot is held in the thoughts and prayers of all of us associated with the chapel. **Stella Tidmarsh.**

Ambassadors Bible Church (at AEFC) While the current situation is so fluid please look at our website www.ambiblechurch.co.uk

Country Matters

Many people have been out and about more reconnecting with nature. Checking crops and cattle this fine April/ early May I have come across several examples of extreme human isolation. In glorious sunshine amongst the bluebells it's amazing where I have found people in various states of undress and why not? The early butterflies have also been enjoying these bright days and in April I have logged, small tortoiseshell, red admiral, peacock, brimstone, orange tip, wall, large and small white and holly blue. I would be interested if anyone spotted more.

Contrast our restrictions on travel during the lockdown with the freedom of birds and especially I am thinking of our feathered friends from Africa migrating to breed here during our summer just as the fieldfares leave for Scandinavia. The first to arrive is the chiff chaff, drab and inconspicuous but from late March I hear their distinctive repetitive, almost annoying chiff chaff chant nearly every day. Several weeks later, from April 18 this year the swallows and martins arrived and my brother at Uffington heard the cuckoo.

When I was really young I remember monitoring the development of a fat cuckoo chick in a hedge sparrow/duncock's nest near to where I was growing up at Shellingford. The last time I heard lots of cuckoos was up on the Island of Skye. I was there to climb the Cuillins and they like it because of an abundance of meadow pipits to play as hosts for their uninvited nesting. Back home this year I have been struck by the frequent melodious songs I hear from lots of blackcaps. I have even been able to get my binoculars on them twice, the male with a black crown. A Whitethroat has eluded me so far. Another pretty though rarer example which can crop up on the downs later on is the yellow wagtail, another migrant and finer than the yellow hammer with a longer tail.

Then in April every year on the downs a flash of white on the rump as they move off, betrays visiting wheatears. They pass through here spring and autumn for a short time only with their distinctive eyeline and love to perch on a hummock. Another summer visitor that you rarely see but sometimes hear on the downs are quail. I would not come across one every year but their call is very individualistic and usually they run on in front of you. Last October at Chipping Norton a small quail was shot by mistake on a partridge shoot. There are similarities in flight to partridge and I have not come across this before. Perhaps this was a late juvenile and too weak to make the flight back to Africa.

Another friend near Broadway tells me that his farm can harbour nightingales which like coppiced woodland. This migrant is more common in Kent and Sussex. Similarly turtle doves are now rare here and it is now over 40 years since I last saw one at Rectory farm but as I mentioned recently both these last two species are turning up in good numbers to the rewilded Knapp estate in Sussex. I also miss a spotted flycatcher which used to nest amongst Virginia creeper climbing the front of Rectory farm house; the creeper died, they stopped coming and the last time I saw one was in Northumberland. **Richard Green**

Contacts

Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman Cliff Davies 01793 710712 chairman@ashbury.org.uk

Clerk to the council: Laura Evans email clerk@ashbury.org.uk

Defibrillator: On the wall by the School entrance

St Mary's Ashbury Parochial Church Council

House-for-Duty – Rev. Nina Summerfield [announced]

Church warden: Maggie Simons 01793 710801

Secretary: Roger Simons 01793 710801 rogersimons1@outlook.com

Vicar (Shrivenham) Revd Norma Fergusson 01793 784338

rev.n.fergusson@btinternet.com (not Monday)

Ashbury Village Hall

Maggie Simons 0193 710801 maggiemsimons@outlook.com

Secretary Margaret Smith 01793 710800 mbsmith5@hotmail.co.uk

Bookings: Lin and Kevin Clarke 01793 710326

Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE(A) Primary School and little Berries Preschool

Headteacher Rachael Smith 01793 710259 www. <http://www.ashburyprimary.org.uk>
office.3851@ashbury.oxon.sch.uk

Ashbury Village Shop 01793 710068

G.P. Surgeries Shrivenham 01793 782207 Lambourn 01488 71715/72299

Post Office at the Rose & Crown Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30-11.30am

Vale of the White Horse District Council 01235 422422

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

Recycling/Rubbish collection queries admin.vale@biffa.co.uk

Food waste is collected weekly, green/black bins alternate each week. Garden waste brown bins fortnightly. Mondays except Bank holidays.

Your Local District Councillors are: Elaine Ware 01973 783026

elaine.ware@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Simon Howell 01793 784491

simon.howell@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor: Yvonne Constance: 01235 751475/07976934884

yvonne.constance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Wantage constituency: David Johnston david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
0207 219 3000

Newsletter entries for July 2020. Submit your entries for July by **19th June** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionlturner@me.com 01793 710302 For more of "what's on" and local information see the Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.