

Aymestrey Matters



Spring 2024



Parish Notice Board



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Thursday 4th April 2pm - Whist Drive
- Saturday 6th April 10.00am -1.00pm - Wild Garlic Pesto Workshop
- Sunday 28th April 10.30am - Bluebell Walk
- Saturday 13th April 7.00pm - 'My life in Music'
- Wednesday 8th May 7.00pm - Annual Parish Meeting
- Saturday 1st June - Safari Supper
- Saturday 8th June 12.00pm - Plant and Produce Sale



Whist Drive
Thursday 4th April
2pm
All abilities
welcome



"Tea/Coffee in the Hall"
Every Tuesday in the Parish Hall
10.30am to 11.30ish

Save the Dates
Aymestrey Fete
20th July
Flower & Produce
Show
3rd August

Meeting of the Parish
Wednesday 8th May
7.00pm in The Parish Hall
Come and have a say in what you would like to
be done locally



Carpet Bowls
Monday Evenings
@ Parish Hall
7pm
All Welcome

Parish Council
Meetings
held in the Parish Hall
7.00pm
4th Wednesday in the
month
ALL Parishioners are
welcome to attend

Plant and Produce Sale
Saturday 8th June
12.00pm at the Hall
Bring your spare
plants and produce to
sell. £5 per table
Come along and buy
from local people
Book a table.
Dee ~ 07434621260

EDITORS' PAGE

Welcome to a bumper issue of Aymestrey Matters, we are so grateful to our contributors who spend their time writing articles, finding pictures and creating a magazine that we hope you find informative and entertaining. We always welcome input and copy from all, if you are interested in contributing in any way please do contact us.

Here we are approaching Spring, although buds are already sprouting, grass growing and daffodils going over; with temperatures generally above the norm. The Bluebell Walk has been moved to April this year, possibly from fear of missing them; it is a sight to see and we are very lucky to have such displays in our parish.

Also it's good to see the Hall Users Survey is showing we can affect what goes on in our area, suggestions of a Foot Health Clinic and Whist Drive have both come to fruition whilst other things are in the pipeline.

Lets hope the Traffic Calming group are successful in trying to do something about what is thoughtless speeding through the village of Aymestrey, as we now have more evidence of how speed and careless driving combine to create so much chaos. The Parish Hall having been left with probably months of upheaval and whilst it was lucky no-one was injured or worse, it could all have been avoided by careful and considerate driving instead of trying to get where-ever, as fast as possible.

Excellent cover design again from Imogen Davis, thanks for giving us such beautiful and witty front covers, to grace the magazine.

Denise & Martyn

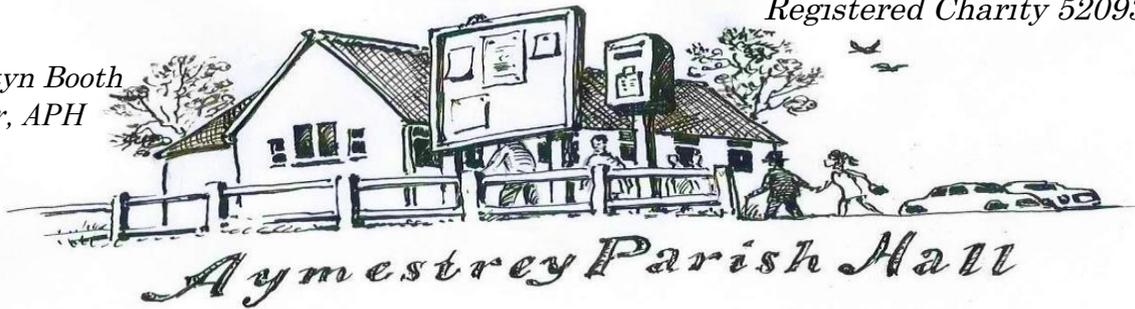
*Please forward all articles, photos, notices and letters to
editor@aymestrey.org*

Aymestrey Calendar 2025

Now is the time to start taking those photographs which can feature in next years calendar, reflecting the seasons and local character of the parish.

Landscape format please.

Martyn Booth
Chair, APH



Changes at the Hall

The Parish Hall Annual General Meeting (AGM), in January which was open to all parishioners, saw some changes to our management committee; Steph Dunn stood down as Chair after four years in the role and Dan Hurcomb resigned as Treasurer also after four years. A massive thank you, goes to them both, for all their hard work, I am pleased to report that Steph is staying on the committee and although Dan has left us he has become a trustee. A copy of the Chair's and Treasurer's reports for 2023 are displayed on the Hall notice board.

I have taken over as chair, Ian Banks has become treasurer and Pauline Hammond is our new bookings secretary, Dee Booth stays as Hall secretary.

Even if you're not a regular user of the Hall, you can't have helped notice the recent 'alteration' to the entrance. This happened on the afternoon of the Burns Night Supper, when a BMW travelling north, left the road and deposited our fence into the foyer before hitting the corner of the hall, the building shook and light-shades fell. The emergency services arrived; we had 2 fire engines, 3 police cars, an ambulance and also a first responder. Although the driver was badly shaken, fortunately she wasn't seriously hurt. Special thanks to all who helped at the time, particularly Doug Murrie and Peter Wright for tidying up the glass and destruction and making a temporary fix to the doorway. In what is becoming an Aymestrey tradition, the show went on and the Burns Night Supper was a great success.

We are currently unsure how long repairs are going to take. A structural engineer has declared the hall is safe, however the damage is more than superficial and we are in the hands of insurers, assessors, engineers and sub-contractors, in fact eight different companies to date.

We would like to thank all our customers and users for their patience and understanding of the situation, with the lack of disabled access being a particular concern although currently the consequences are being overcome.

Despite all the upheaval, the hall remains busy, with all the weekly events such as Bowling, the Coffee Morning, Pilates classes and Sequence Dancing still running plus regular monthly events such as quizzes and film nights all taking place.

As a follow on to the 'user survey' done last year, we now have a Foot Health Practitioner, Angie Lennox, running a monthly clinic at the hall, this is on the third Monday of each month, please contact Angie for appointments. *See details across.*

A Whist Drive has been organised at the hall by Hazel Bows, this will take place on Thursday 4th April at 2.00pm, if popular this may become a regular event.

Our Hall is a community facility and the committee are always open to offers of help and always welcome suggestions for events.

Martyn.....and on behalf of the Hall Committee

AYMESTREY PARISH HALL

Provides excellent facilities for all your events



**Children's Parties, Birthdays, Anniversaries,
Wedding, Christening & Wake Receptions,
Meetings & Workshops**

Large, welcoming main hall with stage & screen.

Comfortably seats 90 + people at tables.

*Well equipped kitchen with large cooker, two sinks, dishwasher, fridge, freezer,
ample preparation space and serving hatch.*

Separate side room. Free Wi-Fi.

Very reasonable rates – Tel: 07796 590266

Angie Lennox Foot Health

I am originally from London but now living in Leintwardine and absolutely love it. I've worked in social care for the last 20 years, which I enjoyed enormously, but more recently felt the time was right for me to set up as a foot health practitioner. I've completed my level 4 diploma and clinical training, giving me a complete grounding in foot anatomy, care and diagnosis and providing me with the knowledge, information and support to establish a successful practice. Registered & fully insured with a website coming soon.

I offer toenail cutting and filing, removal of corns, callus, hard skin, athlete's foot/verruca, fungal nail testing, vascular and neuropathy testing. I can also apply padding and dressings, for example for cracked heels and fissures.

Initially we fill in a consent form and medical history notes and then examine the feet and talk to you about your concerns, and decide a treatment plan.

We may plan a return visit, to the clinic held at Aymestrey Hall and will carry out my treatment and be with you as long as needed. I use sterile equipment with every client and finish all treatments with a nice, relaxing foot massage: so feeling like you're walking on air!

My usual price is reduced for using the clinic at Aymestrey Hall.

Call 07977 108 391 for Appointments

Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls Churches

Dear friends,

For those I haven't yet met, my name is Rosie Roberts and I'm the new Curate (i.e. trainee vicar) in this area. It's a joy and a privilege to be working amongst you here.

I wonder if you have given anything up for Lent; if so, how's it going? I expect you might be looking forward to Easter Day so you can break your fast and have that bar of chocolate, glass of wine, packet of crisps of whatever else you have been trying to avoid for the last month or so!

One thing that's brought me and my family a lot of joy in the early months of this year is the film *Wonka*; we have been to the cinema to see it twice and spent a lot of car journeys singing along to the soundtrack! If you haven't seen it yet, - you must! It imagines the back story of Willy Wonka, where Willy arrives in a new city determined to share his magical chocolate with the world, but is initially thwarted by the 'chocolate cartel' and the sinister Mrs Scrubbit and Mr Bleacher who force him to work in their wash house. There he makes friends with the other 'inmates', who ultimately help him to realise his dream. One of the things I really love about this film is the almost childlike hope Willy brings to the other workers in the wash house who seem to have lost all hope of joy and freedom. It's a wonderful film - maybe our village hall might be able to show in it a future film night?!

Hope is a much-needed commodity these days; there's so much in the news and in the pressures of our daily lives that can make it hard to have hope for the future. But there are signs of hope there if we look for them, for example in the kindness and humanity we see in other people. Also we are starting to see signs



of spring - another reason to have hope.

There's a song I love called *It Will Be Good by The Porter's Gate* (you can find it on YouTube if you want to hear it for yourself), which we used at the last Forest Church at Aymestrey Church, at the end of February and which talks of how we can have confidence that God will give us good things, even when we find it hard to see the way ahead. It contains the beautiful line: "And let the rains come early / and let the rains come late / the seasons still are turning / if only we will wait..." The inevitable turning of the seasons can be a reminder to us all to have hope: that sunshine will follow rain, day will follow night, light will follow darkness.

For Christians, Easter is the ultimate season of hope, when we remember that Jesus came and defeated death with the power of love and through refusing to be silenced by the threat of institutional violence. But this hope is for life, not just for Easter, and we carry this hope with us through the rest of the year. If you would like to join us for any of the church services this Easter, or on any Sunday, you will find a warm welcome and a message of hope. Or if social justice is more your thing, join us on Thursday evenings in March, April and May for talks on issues of social justice; on 14th March we will be looking at Israel/Palestine, on 18th April it will be climate justice and on 23rd May refugees and asylum seekers. The hope is that these talks will bring the community together and raise awareness of these important issues, as well as some funds -

they are free events but donations for the charities we will be supporting are very welcome! Look out for the poster in this edition of Aymestrey Matters and around the village and give me a call if you have any questions - my number's on the poster. When people come together to learn and try to make the world a better place, it always gives me hope.

For those who have abstained this Lent, enjoy that bar of chocolate, bag of crisps, glass of wine or whatever else when you break your fast at the end of the month! I pray that you will find a message of hope this spring, whether it's a sunny day, a

new flower, an act of kindness or moment of peace to connect with God.

With every blessing,

Rosie

Revd Rosie Roberts

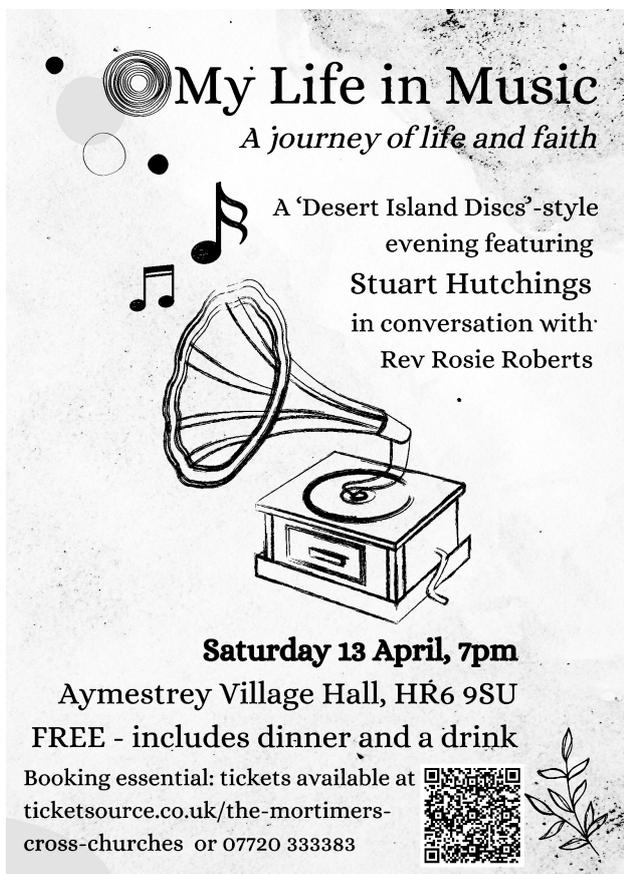
Curate

The Mortimer's Cross Churches
Kingsland, Eardisland, Aymestrey & Leinthall Earls

sowing faith and sharing love in today's world

revd.rosie@mortimerscrosschurches.co.uk | 07720 333383

I do not work on Monday or Wednesday so if you contact me on these days please expect me to take a little longer to reply!



My Life in Music
A journey of life and faith

A 'Desert Island Discs'-style evening featuring **Stuart Hutchings** in conversation with **Rev Rosie Roberts**

Saturday 13 April, 7pm
Aymestrey Village Hall, HR6 9SU
FREE - includes dinner and a drink

Booking essential: tickets available at ticketsource.co.uk/the-mortimers-cross-churches or 07720 333383



Social Justice Talks at Aymestrey Church

Thursdays, 7:30-9pm

Refreshments provided - no entry charge but donations welcome for charities (see below)
To book contact Rosie on 07720 333383



14 March - Israel/Palestine

Proceeds to EAPPI - sharing stories and advocating for justice in Palestine

18 April - Climate justice

Proceeds to South Shropshire Climate Action

23 May - Refugees and asylum seekers

Proceeds to Herefordshire City of Sanctuary



Church Notice Board



EASTER 2024

PALM SUNDAY

Benefice Service at Aymestrey

24th March at 10.30am

Join the procession around the churchyard
and into church behind the Donkey

MAUNDY THURSDAY

28th March.

Benefice service 7pm
at Kingsland

GOOD FRIDAY

29th March at 10am

meet at Leinthall Church and
'Walk with the Cross'

Followed by hot chocolate and
hot cross buns

SATURDAY 30th March

from 10am

Come and help decorate Aymestrey
Church for Easter.

All donations of daffodils, spring
flowers and greenery most welcome!
Either bring with you or leave in the
church porch - Thank you.

EASTER SUNDAY

Services at: Aymestrey 11am Holy Communion

Leinthall 3.30pm Holy Communion

*****SAFARI SUPPER*****

SATURDAY 1ST JUNE starting at 6pm

(Save the date)

**ENJOY GREAT COMPANY AND DELICIOUS FOOD AT SELECTED VENUES
AROUND THE PARISH!**

To help raise funds for urgent works to the fabric of our
Grade I and Grade II* listed churches at Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls

Further details and tickets available from...

Meg Thorpe (07943 046450) or Bronwyn Hutchings (01547 540511)

Mortimer Ward

Carole Gandy

Well Spring has at last arrived and the spring flowers along the roadside are a cheery sight when driving around.

The Ward has experienced several flooding events and the roads within Mortimer ward are in an even worse state than just a few months ago. Herefordshire has only two roads in the county which are the responsibility of Highways England and a further 2000 miles of road which are the responsibility of the local authority. Very few local authorities are faced with such challenges. I will continue to push for more money to be spent in Mortimer ward on road repairs.



At a Full Council meeting, when the budget and Council Tax was set for 2024/25 more money was allocated to the repair of roads, public rights of way and drainage but despite the increase in these budgets, it has been estimated that an extra £100 million would be needed, to bring all our roads, up to an acceptable condition. It is therefore imperative that when you come across a pothole or a drainage issue that you log it on the Herefordshire Council website app.

Much to my disappointment we, as a minority administration had no choice but to raise Council Tax to the maximum 4.99% which includes 2% ring fenced for Adult Social Care. With Herefordshire continuing to have an above the national average of residents 65+ and also 85+ a significant amount of our finances are spent on Adult Social Care. That, alongside the fact, we are a large county in area but small in population with just over 187,000 residents, means that the amount of Council Tax we receive, compared with our neighbouring authorities, with populations of over 500,000 is small yet due to our rurality delivering care to those in their homes and to families struggling is more challenging.

The positive messages are, that unlike many authorities, Herefordshire is financially in a good place going forward and has as stated above, committed to investing extra money in our infrastructure. We are also putting more money into drainage, the lengthsman scheme and public rights of way and we are not increasing car parking charges, as we recognise that businesses are still recovering from the pandemic.

Myself and Barry continue to attend the monthly Quiz, never winning, but it is the taking part so they say, that matters. I also try to attend the Coffee Mornings but not always possible.

By the time you read this article I believe that the Aymestrey Traffic Calming Group will have presented their plans to the Highways Officer at Herefordshire Council. These plans have my full support and I hope some can be put in place in the not too distant future.

I went out with the late night street pastors in Hereford on a Saturday at the end of February to understand what kind of problems they encounter in the City and how they are dealt with. It was an interesting experience.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have a problem or just want a chat via carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk 07792882133 or 01568 780583.

The story of Aymestrey Bridge and the flood of 1795

From the earliest times, Aymestrey probably developed as a settlement because of its position on a major route north and next to a bridgeable point over the River Lugg. During the last couple of months, glimpses of the flood water churning underneath the bridge have inspired me to take another look at this vital piece of infrastructure, subject as it is to a constant and increasing weight of traffic. I was interested to discover that the existence of our elegant and structurally resilient stone bridge was due to the expertise of two gifted individuals whose work was separated by over 136 years: John Gethin of Kingsland, who rebuilt the bridge in 1795 following a devastating flood and G. H. Jack, surveyor for Hereford County Council and enthusiast for traditional bridge building, who lovingly preserved Gethin's design and reused his materials. We have G. H. Jack to thank for the fact that Aymestrey Bridge, along with many others in the county, was not replaced by a steel and concrete construction in the early 1930s when it was realised that it was too narrow to cope with modern traffic.

In researching the building of Gethin's bridge, G. H. Jack wrote;

“Unfortunately there is no record of what the previous bridge was like, but there are references to it in the Quarter Sessions Records of 1688, when Sir Herbert Croft is mentioned as one of the Surveying Magistrates, in company with two more, namely, John Eales and Thomas Matthews, who were to enquire where the best and most convenient stone and other materials may be had for the repair of the bridge and still earlier in 1683 there is a note: ‘A payne of forty shillings if Mr. Weaver doe not repayre the bridge at Aymestrey before next Sessions’.”

The Weaver family, who owned the original Yatton Court at this time, seem to have been responsible to some extent for maintaining the bridge.

It is uncertain when this bridge was actually constructed, but there is a record of what it may have looked like preserved in a detail on the Yatton Court Estate Map drawn in 1775. This shows the original house next to the road, adjacent to a bridge spanning the river with four arches and decorated with crenelations. The river is canalised as it flows past Yatton Court and the buildings of the Riverside Inn, formerly The Crown, appear broadly similar to how they are today. This is the only known image of the original Yatton Court as well as the earlier Aymestrey bridge.



The original Yatton Court and Aymestrey Bridge (detail from Yatton Court Estate Map, 1775)

Twenty years after this map was drawn, an arch and pier of this bridge were swept away in the terrible flood of 1795. A vivid eyewitness account of the devastation caused by this flood was given by the Vicar of Aymestrey of the time, the Rev. David Owen, to whom there is a memorial in Aymestrey Church.

“Memorandum At the going off of the frost and snow which lasted with great severity for two months in the beginning of the year 1795, to wit, on the 10th day of February, a very sudden and tremendous flood took place in the Lugg such as had not been known in the memory of man. It carried away the arch and part of the pier next to Mr. Woodhouse’s house [the old Yatton Court], it also burst open the hall door of the same and ruined the floor and furniture, carried away the dairy next the bridge and did other damages in and about the house. The water was above two feet deep in the lower rooms of the Vicarage and carried about and tumbled the cyder hogsheads to our great loss. The bridges upon the Wye, the Severn and most other rivers in the West and North of England were mostly ruined. Great numbers of sheep and cattle were drowned and many lives lost. In short, the inundation was general and attended with dismal consequences D. Owen.”

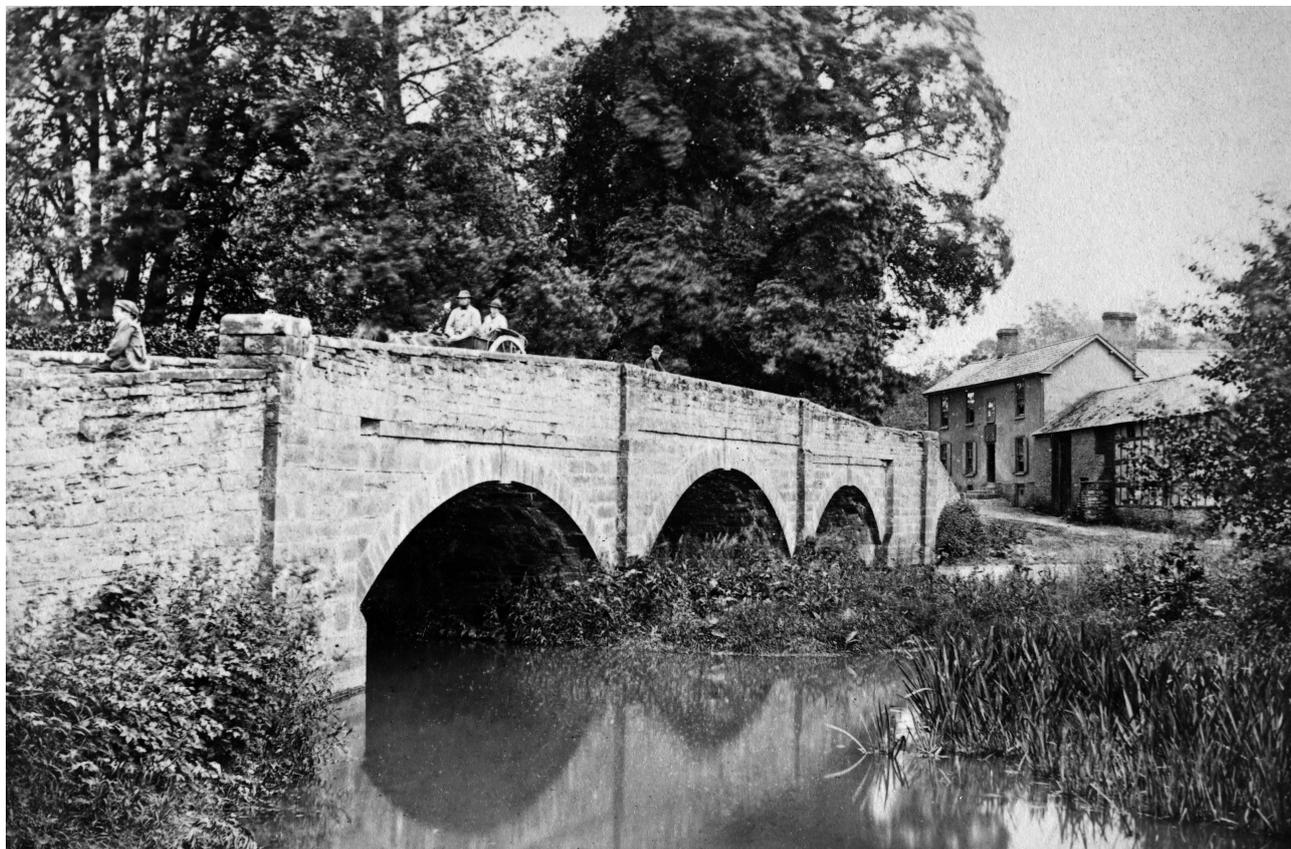
With road communications severed in so many places, the impact on the economy of the whole area must have necessitated swift action. Work on a new bridge, built by John Gethin, surveyor of bridges in the county, began a few months later. As Rev. Owen testifies: “On Thursday, the 27th of August, 1795, the first stone was laid for the foundation of Aymestree’s new bridge by the two brothers, John and Benjamin Gethin of Kingsland, who undertook the job for about £450.” The old Yatton Court, also badly damaged, was taken down at the same time; the current building, which was under construction at the time, stands well back from the river on higher ground.



Elizabeth Jane Woodhouse Lewis who lived at Yatton Court at the time drew these views of John Gethin’s bridge in 1837. She clearly appreciated the aesthetic qualities of the bridge with its three elegant arches and may well have heard dramatic stories about the flood and its subsequent re-building from her grandmother Elizabeth, the widow of John Woodhouse.



John Gethin, who was also an independent contractor, was in constant demand. Jack concluded that Gethin was likely to have worked on Eardisland, Leintwardine and Mortimer's Cross at about the same time. His career was a long one, and between the years 1825 and 1831 his name was associated with over 50 bridges. In fact he died aged 73 during work on Ivington Bridge. He must have been indefatigable, and Jack was given a charming anecdote about him by a friend of his family, "One day when mounting his horse for a tour of inspection, he was heard to say 'I have ridden that horse as many miles as round the world'."



John Gethin's Aymestrey Bridge in 1872. By the 1930s it was too narrow for motor traffic.

G. H. Jack was appointed County Surveyor to Hereford County Council Surveyor in 1907 with oversight of the country bridges. Until he retired in 1932, he made it his business to restore and preserve many of the ancient stone bridges in the county, arguing that they were structurally sound and that it was not necessary to replace them with steel and concrete. Jack was particularly impressed by the integrity and craftsmanship of Gethin's work and it is through him that the earlier bridge builder's name is known at all.

At Aymestrey, it was necessary to replace John Gethin's bridge, but Jack took great care to preserve the design and appearance of his bridge.

"I am now engaged in demolishing what was perhaps one of his largest undertakings in Herefordshire, viz., Aymestrey Bridge, which has three arches, one of 30 ft. span and two of 25 ft. span. The sole necessity for rebuilding has arisen through the old bridge being too narrow and it is interesting to note that I shall be able to re-use 80 per cent. of the material employed by Gethin in his original bridge and further, I have decided that it is not possible to better his design. I am, therefore, replacing the elevations which he designed, stone for stone. The bridge has stood for 136 years, and there is not a sign of a crack or displacement in either the piers or the arches. I very much doubt if some of our modern concrete bridges will stand up so well for such a long period of time and stress. It is certain that their appearance will not be so good."

As George Charnock wrote in 1988, “The rebuilding of Aymestrey Bridge was a job of which Mr. Jack was particularly proud. Here all his developed principles of achieving the necessary widening, the removal of humps which obscured lines of sight, together with strengthening for modern traffic were all obtained at the most economic cost without loss of the old bridge’s attractive and fitting appearance. The bridge had been built 136 years earlier by Herefordshire’s other famous Bridge Master John Gethin of Kingsland and Mr. Jack was at pains to ensure that Gethin’s work was enhanced rather than desecrated.”



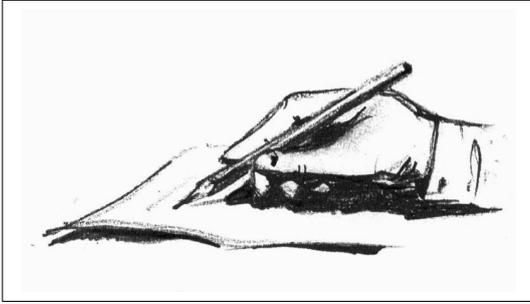
Aymestrey Bridge, rebuilt by G. H. Jack and the Hereford Bridge Brotherhood between June 1931 and March 1932.

Towards the end of his long career, G. H. Jack had formed a brotherhood of masons and labourers, known as the Hereford Bridge Brotherhood, to maintain traditions of craftsmanship and excellence in bridge building. In 1932 alone, they attended to 103 of the county’s bridges. Jack was celebrated nationally for his work on bridges; when he finally retired in 1932, the Brotherhood gave him a celebratory tea at the Crown Inn (now The Riverside) adjacent to the bridge. We know one of the Brotherhood, George Roberts the draughtsman/architect, heavily involved with Aymestrey Bridge and staying, during construction, at the Crown fell in love and married Lucy, the daughter of the landlord. We understand there was a picture, previously hanging in the Crown, of the large number of workmen and managers who built the bridge in 1931/32 and any further information about these workmen, many probably local, or indeed pictures would be very welcome. **NK**

G. H. Jack, “John Gethin, Bridge Builder of Kingsland, Herefordshire, 1757-1831”, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club*, 1931, pp86-97. <https://www.woolhopeclub.org.uk/system/files/documents/transaction/woolhope-club-1930-1-2.pdf>

George Charnock, “Ancient Bridges and a Hereford Bridge Brotherhood”, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club*, 1988, pp12-26.

<https://www.woolhopeclub.org.uk/system/files/documents/transaction/woolhope-club-transactions-volume-xlvi-1988-part-i.pdf>



Parish Council

Chairman, Ian Goddard, reflects on Parish Council doings and extracts from the Clerk's postbag.

Let's talk money

Your Parish Council has several sources of funding for its activities and here I set out where the money comes from, describe the budgeting process and set out the role the Parish Council plays within the annual Council Tax demand.

County Council funding

It is inappropriate for me to express any political view in the privilege of writing this page and so I merely relate the facts. Central government limits the amount county councils can raise by council tax. This year the increase is limited to 2.99%, plus an additional 2% for adult social care. The way they are funded by central government and the limits imposed on tax raised locally restrict the income of county councils and/or what they can spend it on.

Parish Council funding

Sources of funds for a Parish Council are:

Reserves

Grants and fund-raising, e.g. sponsorship of projects

Precept

Reserves generally arise from unspent income, whether budgeted for or arising by circumstances. One might budget to raise a reserve, as we are required to do for the cost of holding local elections, or an excess might arise because some expected expenditure did not take place. A reserve in this context is money retained and set aside for the future.

Grants and fund-raising are self-explanatory and in my experience, at Aymestrey, are always given for specific tasks and projects. Some grants to Aymestrey Parish Council have come from Herefordshire Council, generally, when it has passed on to the Parishes, grant monies it has received from central government hypothecated to a purpose. Recent match-funding for drainage works is an example.

The last and most important source of funds for a Parish Council is the **annual Precept**. This is the amount of money which a Parish Council requires its County Council to raise for the Parish as part of its local tax collection. It appears on the Council Tax Bill under "Aymestrey Parish". The bill also sets out a line called "Gross Precept" and that is the figure I am talking about from here. The Gross Precept is an amount determined by the Parish Council and which the County Council is required to raise as part of the Council Tax. Unlike funding for county councils, central government has not set limits on raising this precept.

Aymestrey Parish Council has a budgeting process to determine what expenditure it expects and wants to undertake in the forthcoming financial year (April to March inclusive). The process is initiated in September by me, the Chairman, asking Councillors to raise any expenditure beyond our regular commitments which they would like to be considered or anticipate that we will need to meet.

Aymestrey has a Finance Group of three Councillors which meets with our Clerk, who, apart from her extensive knowledge on Parish Council responsibilities, is our RFO – ‘Responsible Financial Officer’. With the information from previous years and any proposals by Councillors the RFO prepares a draft budget which is then discussed by the Finance Group with the Clerk in attendance. That group considers all matters which it foresees for the next financial year and puts a financial proposal to the full Council in October. All Councillors then look at, consider and debate the proposals and likely costs, in some cases having to estimate costs to meet known unknowns (i.e. we know there will be things for the Lengthsman to do but we cannot know all of the problems he will need to resolve during the year). That budget is always put on the website (aymestrey.org) so that the public can see the proposals and can attend the Parish Council meetings at which it will be considered. Following the debate in October our Clerk revises the proposal for presentation to the full Council at the November meeting.

The November discussion is important. By this time our Clerk should have received from Herefordshire a statement of the mix of households in the Parish and so the effect of any budget proposal on a particular rated property can be calculated – this is always taken as a Band D property. Councillors can then balance expenditure, the use of reserves and other income opportunities together with the proposed precept demand and see the effect on a Band D household, make adjustments which they consider necessary and approve the budget, which finalises the precept amount needed.

Aymestrey Precept 2024 – 2025

So much for the process. I have been keen to demonstrate that it is a robust scrutiny of our financial obligations while trying to meet community aspirations. Over the last five years Aymestrey Parish Council has endeavoured to keep its precept demand lower than it might otherwise have been, by tight control of expenditure and its use of reserves to top-up income to match the requirement. We have used £4,540 of reserves and the precept has been raised by only 5% over that five-year period. Regrettably this approach is unsustainable in the long term and your Parish Council has, in this year, made a precept request which matches our expected expenditure. That is a precept of £13,400 against budgeted expenditure of £14,000, the other £600 comes from sharing the cost of Aymestrey Matters.

I do not set out the budget here: it is on the website (as it has been since November) for public scrutiny. It calls for an extra £2,000 over the precept for 2023 -2024 without use of remaining reserves. It is part statutory requirement and part necessary caution that we retain a general reserve for unbudgeted expenditure and that is now approximately 36% of annual expenditure.

While the percentage increase in the Aymestrey Parish Gross Precept looks significant at 17.5, the cash effect for a Band D property is an increase of £9.96 over the year, less than £1 per month. Adjustments to that figure need to be made pro rata for lower and higher rateable values. While no increase in a tax is welcome, I do ask that some appreciation is given to your Council for sensible budgeting and the repression of increases over the last five years.

I imagine that going forward precept demands will match budgeted expenditure more closely than in recent years, but that will be for your Council to decide year on year.

Ian

Aymestrey Fete 20th July & Produce Show 3rd August 2024

Arts and crafts show and competition at the Fete.

It may be wintry weather outside but summer will soon be with us and with it the Aymestrey Village Fete. Last year's Arts & Crafts Competition saw a bumper selection of entries and celebrated the creativity and skill of participants of all ages.

A few tweaks have been made to the competition classes for 2024 (see schedule over) in particular the introduction of a Floral Art category. This will give everyone a chance to show off their flower arranging skills and brighten up the competition tent no end.

The Junior Section is always popular with entrants and judges alike. Additions for this year will include a Lego model and a poem about the weather.

Cups and Judges

The competition season in Aymestrey gets underway over the summer with the Arts & Crafts Competition at the Village Fete on the 20th July, followed by the Produce & Flower Show in the Parish Hall on 3rd August. This format has been very successful over the past couple of years but has proved pretty hard work for the competition Judges. With this in mind, the Village Fete Committee would be grateful to hear from anyone who is interested in helping out as a Judge. You do not need to be an expert and the judging takes only an hour or so at either the Fete and Produce Show. Anyone interested should contact Dan Hurcomb- hurcombdc@gmail.com

The awarding of trophies is important recognition for our talented winners and we currently have; the Joyce Pugh cup for baking; the Steven Price cup for produce and the Rose Cup. There is also a Best in Show cup. However, now we have two Shows it would be nice to have additional trophies to award. A second Best in Show trophy would be particularly useful, as well as awards to recognise any of the other categories or classes. If anyone would consider donating a cup or trophy, the Village Fete Committee would be extremely grateful. Again, please contact Dan Hurcomb- hurcombdc@gmail.com

Produce & Flower Show

It's a mystery - Aymestrey Matters Mystery Seeds

Aymestrey Matters Mystery Seeds have become a popular class in the Produce and Flower Show and over the past years an envelope with the seeds has been attached to the Spring edition of Aymestrey Matters. This year we have decided on a different approach in order to cut down on waste and make sure the seeds get to those who really want them. With that in mind, packs of Mystery Seeds will be available to collect from the Parish Hall and the Church during March and April. We look forward to some beautiful and mysterious entries at the Produce & Flower Show!

The next edition of Aymestrey Matters will, of course have the full schedules and running order for a fun filled main ring with displays, children's games and not forgetting, the fun dog show.

.. from 'The Aymestrey Fete Team'

**There will be a meeting of the Fete Team on Wednesday 23rd April at 7.30pm
If you would be willing to help in any way please come along or give your details
to Dan~ hurcombdc@gmail.com**

Aymestrey Village Fete 20th July 2024

Arts and Crafts Competition Classes

Food and drinks

The entrant with the most points accumulated from Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 will win the Joyce Pugh Cup for cookery

Class 1 - An un-iced carrot cake.

Class 2 - A loaf of bread (any recipe)

Class 3 - Three flapjacks on a plate

Class 4 - Two sausage rolls on a plate

Class 5 - A home-made fruit or alcoholic beverage

Class 6 - A jar of sweet preserve

Class 7 - A jar of savoury preserve

Class 8 - Three eggs on a plate (judged on uniformity and yolk appearance)



Handicrafts

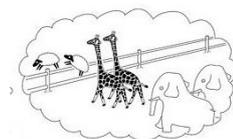
Class 9 - A handmade item, any material/s except wood

Class 10 - An item of knitting or crochet

Class 11 - A piece of cross-stitch or embroidery

Class 12 - An item hand crafted from wood

Class 13 - A drawing or painting on a subject of your choice



Floral Art

Class 14 - An arrangement of 3 single fresh flowers and foliage

Class 15 - A miniature floral arrangement of fresh flowers (max 6 inches x 6 inches)

Class 16 - A table centrepiece incorporating fresh and/or dried flowers and foliage

Junior Section

Please state age on all exhibits

Class 17 - A Lego model, not from a kit

Class 18 - An animal made from fruit and/or vegetables

Class 19 - A drawing or painting of a wild animal or bird

Class 20 - Three home baked and decorated fairy cakes on a plate

Class 21 - A poem about the Weather



All Exhibits **MUST** be the work of the Exhibitor.
Any items previously entered will not be eligible.



Produce and Flower Show Schedule Saturday 3rd August, 2024

Vegetables and Fruit

- Class 1 - 3 white or red potatoes (washed) on a plate
- Class 2 - 2 courgettes on a plate
- Class 3 - 3 runner beans on a plate
- Class 4 - 5 dwarf or French beans on a plate
- Class 5 - 3 onions on a plate
- Class 6 - 3 beetroots with 3-inch tops on a plate
- Class 7 - 3 carrots with 3-inch tops on a plate
- Class 8 - 1 cucumber on a plate
- Class 9 - 3 tomatoes on a plate
- Class 10 - a selection of salad items (max 3 types) on a plate
- Class 11 - 3 stems of rhubarb
- Class 12 - a selection of soft fruit (max 3 types) on a plate
- Class 13 - an amusing vegetable



Flowers

- Class 14 - a single rose in a vase
- Class 15 - a vase of my garden perennials, mixed
- Class 16 - a flowering house plant
- Class 17 - a jug of flowers from my garden
- Class 18 - a vase of 5 sweet peas (any colour)
- Class 19 - a vase of 3 dahlias (any variety)
- Class 20 - a hand tied bunch of fresh herbs
- Class 21 - the best cut flower in my garden (in a vase)
- Class 22 - the best scented flower in my garden (in a vase)
- Class 23 - a vase of foliage (up to 5 varieties)
- Class 24 - Aymestrey Matters mystery seeds



All Exhibits – MUST be the property of the exhibitor
and grown on their land.

Thoughts from a Retired Gardener

Jim Logan

Toads

13th February, a warm damp evening, my son has just left the house to drive home and has rung to say that there are toads all along the end of our lane and many squashed at the road junction where they must cross to reach the nearby lake.



I went up there suitably equipped with 'high-vis' jacket torch and bucket and quickly collected more than thirty toads all male. They being smaller than the females and they confirm their masculinity by clasping my fingers in an amorous manner. I released them at the side of the lake squirming and indignantly chirping their maleness. The road is littered with squashed corpses of toads and a few more live ones to collect. The traffic is infrequent but fast. I have to be cautious. It would be naive and dangerous to expect drivers to weave around all of the toads on the road but the sad thing is that most drivers seem to be totally unaware of their presence, when they are in plain view. Toads migrating to spawn pause frequently to get their bearings and their characteristic upright posture is easily seen. So a toad on the tarmac is pretty obvious at forty yards in headlights and can usually be straddled safely.

Four days later it is again raining and there is a repeat performance. This time my grandson, Oli accompanies me with torch and bucket. The amphibians are leaving the hedgerow and verges between two vast arable fields where they've lain torpid for several months, the end of our lane funnels them towards the road and danger. This time there are some female toads present and two of these are carrying a male gripping on to their back in amplexus. The females usually arrive later at spawning sites,

it's their prerogative I suppose. Oli and I collect almost one hundred toads and take them safely across the road.

The toads favour the lake for spawning, frogs spawn there too in separate areas but will also make do with small ponds. In April and May the shallows of the lake will be alive with black toad tadpoles, they are darker than the bronze frog, 'taddies' and in this lake, I've seen them shoal up occasionally to swim in open deep water appearing as a very slow moving object several feet long. Toad tadpoles like their parents have toxic skin which gives them some level of protection from predators.

In June or July, in damp weather there is again a mass migration, this time of toadlets dispersing from the lake in all directions. Tiny little mites with blind ambition clambering over all in their path, a bullock's hoof print in the mud is a major obstacle when you're the size of a blackcurrant. Some get lucky and find themselves in permanent pasture or woodland and hedges others chance upon silage fields, garden lawns or pheasant coverts and fare worse.



By late summer they have grown into dainty miniature toads and are everywhere, even the edges of arable fields. They must find a niche and survive for three or four years before they can join the spring breeding migration.

It may seem that toads survive out of luck rather than judgment but there is an ancient wisdom inherent in the species, honed by millennia of natural selection in an environment that didn't include roads and wheeled traffic, efficient silage harvesting or concentrations of predatory game birds. Nevertheless they seem to be thriving here.

And we, Homo Sapien (wise man), are we really? We're inventive and create wondrous things but we are in equal measure belligerent and destructive. The toads may yet have the last laugh, when we croak.

Jim

Aymestrey Carpet Bowls



Aymestrey Carpet Bowls Spring Report

Monday evenings from 7pm is Carpet Bowls at the Parish Hall (a reminder to all players, please try arrive as close to 7pm as you can, this is especially important when we running internal competitions, as it helps us to arrange the games).

The club runs all through the year (although sometimes we take a break during August). We have two mats and normally, during the evening, we play social games (friendlies) between teams of two. The evenings are well supported with typically around 12 -14 people turning up, which means most players typically play two games of bowls. One of the highlights for many during the evening is the Tea Break with biscuits and plenty of “chat” (occasionally there’s even cake!) this is kindly organised by Steph Dunn (with others usually chipping in to help tidy up).

Dave Dunn (Kiwi) continues to be our Captain and generally tries to organise and encourage us to improve our play. A few months ago I volunteered to run our internal competitions which, as it turns out, means I also get to write up this report!

Over the past few months, we’ve had a few new players join and they have quickly settled in; we are always keen to have others come along and try their hand; no previous experience is required. Usually, the games are not taken too seriously (that is unless there’s a cup up for grabs!) so new players shouldn’t feel intimidated.

During the winter months we take part in the North Herefordshire’s Carpet Bowls League Competition; there are just 4 Village teams that make up this League, Aymestrey, Wigmore, Lingen and Titley. We play all teams at home and away to determine the League Champions. This year’s competition has just finished with Titley the winners, unfortunately Aymestrey missed out on a top 3 finish this year. Whilst Aymestrey *should* have a distinct home advantage, because our Hall floor is not as flat as it appears so the bowls don’t behave as you would expect; although we play on this floor week in and week out, it still manages to catch us out with its unpredictability. I think it changes with the atmospheric, well that’s the excuse I use when we fail to capitalise during our home games!

As part of the North Herefordshire’s League there is a “Finals Night”, this year hosted by Aymestrey, where each Village puts forward their “Pairs and Singles Champions” to compete against each other to become the Local Champions. We ran our own internal Championships to determine the Pairs Team to represent us and we held a quick knock-out competition to find a singles player to represent us. Irene Wheeler and Kiwi became our Pairs Champions, with Chris Richmond & Kris Johnston the runners up. Kiwi won our Singles competition, with Martyn Booth the runner-up. Because Kiwi couldn’t represent us twice during the Finals night, the Club decided to have Chris & Kris play the Pairs Competition, meaning Kiwi could take part in the Singles.



During the “Finals Night” Chris & Kris narrowly missed out on reaching the Final, eventually won by Wigmore and despite a scare during his semi-final game Kiwi made it through and won the Final making him the local Singles Champion (again) – Congratulations Kiwi.

Pete

In March, Aymestrey is looking forward to hosting North Herefordshire’s Carpet Bowls Annual Social Event for all the Village teams and their guests. It is planned for an evening of Casino style games with food and drinks.

Curry Night

23rd February 2024 ~ at Aymestrey Hall

A great night was had by around 40 people wishing to sample up to eleven different curries of various types from Mutter Masala (Veg): spicy fish dishes; flavoursome chicken curries to the winning recipe which is printed below. Points were awarded by all who tasted the curries and the final tally made Ian Banks the overall winner.

Goan Beef Curry

A sour and vinegary curry with a rich beef flavour, the number of chillies can be varied. The Kashmiri chillies are not hot but add a smokey heat to the dish.

Makes enough for 8 people

Add a thumb sized piece of cinnamon, 1 tsp of black peppercorns, 1 tsp of cloves, 1 tsp of cumin seeds, 1 tsp of green cardamom seeds (not the whole pod) to a pestle and mortar and crush to a fine powder. (I use an electric coffee grinder)

Add the above powder to 2 tbsp of tamarind liquid, 8 cloves of crushed garlic, a large thumb sized piece of gingers cut in to thin strips, 1 tsp of salt, 1 tsp of sugar, 5 tbsp of white wine vinegar and 6 dried Kashmiri chillies in to a large bowl. Mix together and then mix in 1kg of Beef shin.

Cover with cling film and leave in the fridge over night to marinate.

Next day, cut 3 red onions into quarters, and fry in a little oil until soft, add the beef and any juices and 2 cans of chopped tomatoes. Simmer on a low heat for 2-3 hours or until the sauce has reduced, the curry thickened and the beef is tender.

Serve with rice, nan and a raita.

The evening was rounded off with a showing of the film Barbie. Thanks must go to Ian for all the organising and the cooks who entered their curries.

Ed.



What is your earliest childhood memory?

Swinging in a hammock in my parents London Garden aged about 4. I fell out and chipped my tooth on the paving stone. I still remember the blood – and an early visit from the ‘tooth fairy’ which cheered me up.

Where in the world have you most enjoyed travelling

We lived in the Far East for a few years and were able to take advantage of it by travelling round incredible places such as Burma, Thailand and Vietnam. The culture, landscapes and cuisine are fabulous and there is so much yet to see. I also love travelling in Italy.

What is your most memorable moment?

Apart from having my children, it is riding my horse in the Charity Race at Bitterley races. I was terrified to start with but adrenalin took over and I found it was unbelievably exciting. From a very slow start my horse just accelerated and seemed to motor towards the front - unfortunately I didn't win. I am sure we would have if the course was a little longer but I have re-run that race so often in my mind since and each time I finish first!

Who is your favourite artist?

I became obsessed with Raphael when I was studying Italian Renaissance art and architecture. He was a genius and polymath and died tragically young.

What advice would you give a young person leaving home?

Travel, explore with an open mind - and come back!

Domenica Dunne was brought up on Exmoor and made her career in TV production before ‘retiring’ to have four children with her husband Philip. She has been living full time in this corner of Herefordshire for the last 23 years and has pursued a variety of different roles including running a garden society, fundraising and historical research.

What is your favourite Film?

Lawrence of Arabia. Apart from a teenage crush on Peter O’Toole (those amazing blue eyes!) the scene where Omar Sharif approaches the well, has to be one of the most mesmerising and suspenseful ever.

What was your proudest moment? Having my 4 children – so four proudest moments if that is allowed!

What are you passionate about?

My whippet. We have a Labrador also but the whippet is such a character – playfully naughty and exquisitely beautiful to boot.

What is your greatest extravagance?

It used to be shoes – when we lived in Hong Kong, I couldn't buy shoes in my size so I would buy several pairs on trips to England. Then someone pointed out that I really only wear black shoes so I have calmed down and am much more restrained. Perhaps now it is coffee – I really only like it freshly made, piping hot and preferably Lavazza rosso.

What book are you reading at the moment?

A Line in the Sand by James Barr. It is a fascinating history of the British and French vying for control in the Middle East after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and tells us a lot about why things have gone so horribly wrong as a result.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Sitting in a shady garden on a perfect summer's day having lunch with friends and family - and a glass of ice cold rosé.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Patience – life is too short!

What word or phrase do you most overuse?

I’ll get back to you on that one.

What is your favourite piece of music?

Bohemian Rhapsody. I was obsessed with it as a teenager and could sing it by heart. We weren’t allowed the radio at my convent boarding school so we would listen with earphones under the bedclothes – risking madly overheating or being suddenly caught by patrolling nuns. Whenever I hear it those school day memories come flooding back.

How would you like to be remembered?

Fondly!

What is your most treasured possession?

My mother’s eternity ring. She died when I was quite young but she wore it all the time and it reminds me of her.

Do you have motto or proverb that you live by?

Carpe Diem!

MH



The
Wye & Usk
Foundation

Registered Charity No. 1080319

WOODLANDS FOR WATER

Planting Trees to Help Our Rivers

Wye & Usk Foundation Advisors are offering free advice and support to farmers and land managers in the Wye catchment (England) to apply for grants to plant trees to create woodland, wood pasture, agroforestry and traditional orchards.

Benefits of Trees on Farms

Trees can provide shelter for livestock from sun and severe weather, protect crops from wind damage, retain soil moisture and improve drought resilience, stabilize riverbanks and provide shade for fish, reduce flooding downstream, capture eroding soils and nutrients, boost diversity and beneficial pollinator habitat. They can also be a source of production (timber, wood fuel, livestock browse, fruit or nuts, woodchip which can be mixed in with FYM for fertiliser).

Background & Information

Woodlands for Water is the first project developed by the Riverscapes Partnership which, with support from Defra, aims to create more riparian and wider catchment planting in six river catchment areas from Devon to Cumbria by March 2025.

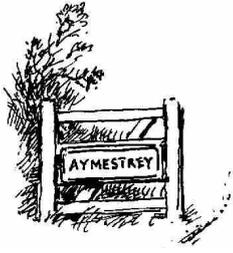
This project is being delivered through the Nature for Climate funding from Defra.

To find out more contact:

Dreda Darling

Email: dreda@wyeuskfoundation.org





Traffic Calming in Aymestrey Parish



UPDATE

I'm pleased to announce that Aymestrey Traffic Calming Proposals has been officially submitted to Herefordshire Council.

We had a 2-hour site meeting on Friday 23rd Feb with a council representative. We went through the proposals in detail, explaining how we'd gathered and interpreted the data, the methodology we'd used to determine hot spots and traffic profiles and what had led us to decide on the solutions we have. We also viewed the proposals in situ through the village.

Our Traffic Calming Proposal document is now being scrutinised and deliberated over by the other council members, who have a say in these things. All I can ask is that you keep your fingers crossed that all goes well. I'll let you know.

Sorry this update is so short. There's nothing more to report at this stage, other than to say – did you see the daffodils planted by the Aymestrey Floral Display Group? More to come from them I understand...

March 2024

Alison Archer

Floral Display Group

Daffodils are blooming in Aymestrey -well, at least there should be some at both ends of the village by the time you receive this edition!

It's a very modest start but floral displays are a quick win in our attempt to calm traffic going through the village, by enhancing the perception of Aymestrey as a community, worthy of careful driving and observance of the speed limits.

Plans are in place to install planters at the gates to the village and also at the north end of the bridge. Discussions are taking place with the Parochial Church Council about enhancing the roadside appearance of the churchyard by planting over the wall and/or on the verge and the Parish Hall Committee are looking at extending their planting.

Residents can help by introducing floral displays, visible from the road, in their gardens and/or verges.

Andy Link and his team at The Riverside Inn have very kindly made a generous donation to the project but if anyone would like to sponsor a planter; trees; shrubs or similar, maybe in commemoration of someone, we would be very pleased to hear from you or indeed, from volunteers to look after the planters. Blooming marvellous! **Mary**

Mary Young on behalf of the Floral Display Group February 2024
mary_young@msn.com or 07831 321659

STOP PRESS-BREAKING NEWS: MCBS Building Supplies have very generously agreed to provide five planters free of charge. This support is greatly appreciated.

Mortimer Medical Practice

News from the Patient Participation Group (PPG)



Spring 2024

Automated Prescription collections

This is an on going idea which is gaining momentum. The idea has been favourably received by people in the area especially those who work full time. However you can be assured that personal collection at the pharmacy will still be available.

Privacy at Kingsland Surgery

Although the radio at Kingsland surgery has gone some way to masking personal conversations, at the reception, it is not always effective. If you wish to discuss something of a private nature you can ask to be seen away from the front desk. The screens are going to be kept to help the staff not to be coughed upon and the receptionist needs to be able to see the waiting patients, in case of an emergency.

Non attendance of appointments

The surgery has been investigating this issue to see why patients still don't attend even after a reminder message is sent. The text will be rephrased to encourage contact if the appointment is no longer needed. Also the surgery is looking into making it easier for patients to cancel which does not require a phone call. Patients are also going to be asked what the reason, for non attendance, is to see if the surgery can help people who cancel.

For the period 12th Oct to 25th Jan, 530 appointments were DNA this equates to 8 full days of appointments and that's at the minimum allotted time, some appointments are even longer.

Car parking

Once again someone's car has been damaged by another driver, this time at Leintwardine surgery. Please be mindful of tight spaces in the car parks and own up if you hit someone else.

Staffing

Dr Black is leaving the practise at the end of June he is taking semi-retirement and will be working as a private GP in Hereford (his work with treating seborrhoeic keratosis will be taken on by another member of staff who is being trained to freeze and also do any minor surgery)

Dr Kemp is also reducing her hours.

The surgery is therefore recruiting for a new GP

PH

Notes From The Marsh

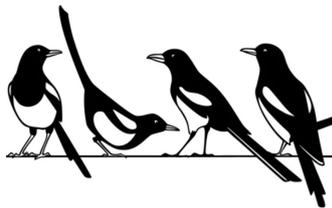
20th Nov 2023- 23rd February 2024

Eat, shoot, or leave?

The Magpies have been diving bombing my re-homed Siamese cat, from the shelter of a huge conifer - which some previous resident planted, without due consideration for location or future size. While one can hardly shoot the long-gone resident, the vexatious question arises again – should one be allowed to shoot Magpies in particular, or indeed corvids in general?

Magpies are corvids, as are our British Ravens, Crows (both Carrion and Hooded), Rooks, Jackdaws and Jays and also coastal Choughs; red-beaked and red footed, which we don't see down our way.

In our landscape, Pies are instantly



recognisable – black-and-white, raucous as 18th century Chattering Maggie and sociable.

The ongoing problems, in all our dealings with corvids, are their intelligence and their omnivorous habits. Most of them will eat carrion which may make them useful as refuse collectors but the fact that they damage live young creatures makes them a threat to the rural economy. They are equally happy to snack on grain, they prey on nestlings and eggs, provoking emotional reactions; it's no

accident that we have 'a murder of magpies' as well as 'a murder of ravens'. Whilst I admire the aesthetics, the strength and the flying manoeuvres of a Peregrine or a Hobby; watching them soar in this valley, I know they will kill, this is their livelihood. So, what about Magpie behaviour? Can we persuade corvids to be totally vegetarian and even if we could, how can we prevent them from eating our crops? The Magpie population has shot up since the late 1960s; large numbers of omnivores like corvids (and humans?) may need some form of control. Shooting does not appear to be a total solution; corvids are long-lived birds which learn from experience - it's well-known that they can tell the difference between a person with a stick and one with a shotgun. So, what about the idiom 'eating crow'- meaning having to confess that you're wrong; this could have come from the Biblical ban on eating Ravens. Can we try turning the tables, and snacking on a Magpie? In the past, there was a belief that eating Magpie would cure epilepsy – but eating scavengers has not been popular in various cultures. Admittedly, I just don't fancy Magpie as a lunch item – is it their lifestyle, or their joie de vivre?

It's also interesting to note that not all cultures share a dislike of the Magpie.



For the Chinese it has been a symbol of good fortune, as well as romance, the Cowherd was separated from his beloved Weaver Girl but once a year the Magpies kindly made a bridge to bring them together. It is a national symbol of Korea.

More scientifically, Magpies are claimed to have self-awareness, according to the Mirror Self-Recognition test. This involves putting a coloured spot onto a bird or other animal, in a place only visible by using a mirror. If the bird can recognise itself in the mirror, it should then investigate where the spot is on its own body. Magpies passed this test with flying colours.

On current evidence, only humans, some apes, elephants and dolphins can do the same. Does this make them more valuable, or more threatening?

Meanwhile, *one for sorrow* describes some of their habits and you may believe, with folklore, that they have a drop of devil's blood, but they're picturesque (see Monet's winter picture) perhaps *two for joy* is the way to go! *Susanna Checketts*

Aymestrey Parish Commons Association



The stands of Scots Pines on Yatton Hill Common, feature on sketches made in the early 1800's, by Elizabeth Jane Woodhouse Lewis, showing they are a historic landmark of the parish. Since we have lost a few of these, in storms of late, we decided to plant a few replacements. So armed with tree guards, stakes and ten seedlings plus a selection of tools, a small work party ascended the hill on a windy day in early February. After recovering our breath, we planted 5 by both of the stands, they were quite small so will need all our love and care for the future.



We are currently planning this years work schedule, our intention is to improve the path around Ballsgate, making it less tricky underfoot in places. On Yatton Hill we also hope to open up an old path that joins the bottom path (Deepmoor to the Hollow Way), up to the Mortimer Trail near the Hillfort, this will require quite a bit of work, so if anyone is feeling up to the task of helping please let me know.

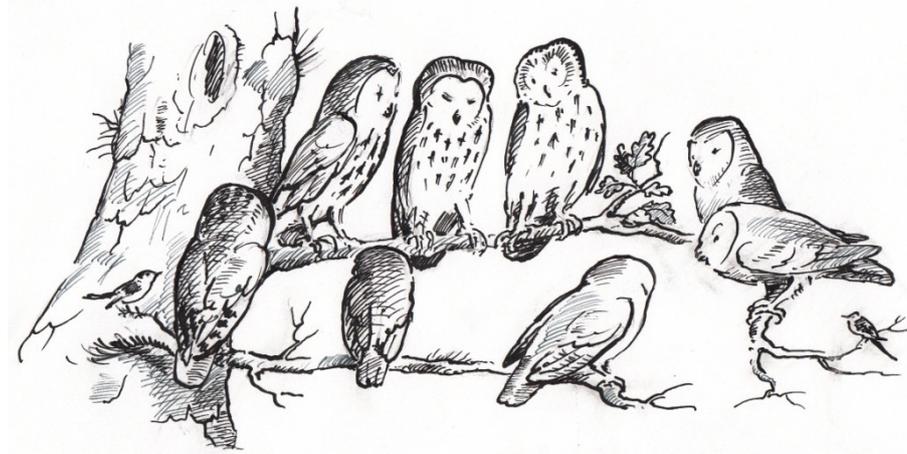
Spring is starting to arrive, animals are becoming more active and migrant birds arriving. We are still trying to build a database of the flora and fauna that live on and use our commons, so any sightings and records would be most welcome.

Please email: martyn_booth@hotmail.com

Martyn

PARISH PEOPLE

Here are some details for people in the parish you might need to contact



PARISH COUNCIL

Chair

Ian Goddard
770251

Vice-chair

Helen Hamilton
709155

Clerk

Maggie Brown
clerk@aymestrey.org
Tel: 07398 222 310

Members

John Probert 708484 - Domenica Dunne 07966103698
Eleanor Waldron - Mike Snoswell (both via Clerk)
Dan Hurcomb hurcombdc@gmail.com - Nicola Luscott nicolaluscott@live.co.uk

Special Responsibilities

Lengthsman: Yatton Farm Services Footpaths: Dave Dunn 770224
Tree Warden: Richard Hammond rjhammond500@btinternet.com
MMP Patient Rep: Pauline Hammond pauline.hammond500@btinternet.com 708044.

Ward Councillor

Carole Gandy 01568 780583 carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk

PARISH HALL

Chair: Martyn Booth 07748604215
Bookings Secretary: Pauline Hammond 708044 or 07796590266

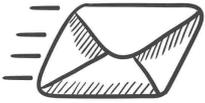
CHURCH

Reverend Julie Read 708255.
Churchwardens: Meg Thorpe 07943046450. Stuart Hutchings 01547540511, 07961117050

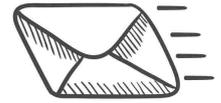
AYMESTREY MATTERS

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PARISH NATTERS & POST BOX



Dear reader, I am looking to explore the possibility of an informal group of volunteers to help with events in the parish. This could be anything from washing up after village events, to setting up/taking down, or running stalls at the fête. The idea is to have a WhatsApp group, where requests for help can be made, and those willing can respond. If you're interested, please email me at swain.catherine@gmail.com with your name and phone number.

Thank you, Catherine

Pavement Parking
There has been a number of items in the press recently about parking on pavements. We have so few pavements in Aymestrey Parish, we should value them as safe places to walk, for wheelchairs and prams etc., for ourselves and visitors to the area.

Yet it keeps happening!

Name and address withheld

Congratulations to Claire Donkin
for making it into Waitrose Food -March 2024
'As a Waitrose asparagus farmer and a globally renowned agronomist who is passionate about soil health, natural pest control and sustainability.'

Letters, notices and events are most welcome, please send to editor@aymestrey.org

Aymestrey Good Neighbour Scheme

Our volunteers are ready to support you by helping with everyday tasks such as:



- 🕒 Fetching prescriptions
- 🕒 Occasional lifts to the doctors or hospital
- 🕒 Shopping and running errands, such as posting a letter
- 🕒 Practical tasks around the house such as changing a light bulb or hanging a picture
- 🕒 Help with forms or letters
- 🕒 Help with a computer
- 🕒 Calling for a chat

If you need a volunteer then please call us on 07942 257541.
Leave a message if there is no reply and one of our volunteers will call you back.

DATES FOR DIARIES 2024

When	What	Where
Mondays 7.00pm	Carpet Bowls	PH
Tuesdays 10.30am to 11.30 am	Tea/Coffee in the Hall	PH
Thursdays 8.00pm	Sequence Dancing	PH
Thursdays 9.30am to 10.30am and 10.45am to 11.45am	Pilates	PH

March

Sunday 17th 3.30pm.	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Monday 18th 10.00am	Foot Health Clinic (booking required)	PH
Sunday 24th 10.30am.	Palm Sunday procession with donkey	Aymestrey
Wednesday 27th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Thursday 28th 7.00pm	Maundy Thursday Service	Kingsland
Friday 29th 10.00am	Good Friday 'Walk with the Cross'	Leinthall Earls
Saturday 30th 10.00am.	Decorating the Church for Easter.	Aymestrey
Easter Day 11.00am	Holy communion BCP.	Aymestrey
Easter Day 3.30pm	Holy communion CW.	Leinthall Earls

April

Thursday 4th 2.00pm	Whist Drive	PH
Saturday 6th 10.00am -1.00pm	Wild Garlic Workshop	PH
Sunday 7th 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Friday 12th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Saturday 13th 7.00pm	'My Life in Music'	PH
Sunday 14th 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Monday 15th 10.00am	Foot Health Clinic (booking required)	PH
Thursday 18th 7.30pm	Climate Change talk	Aymestrey church
Friday 19th 7 for 7.30pm	Film Night	PH
Sunday 21st 3.30pm	Holy communion CW.	Leinthall Earls
Wednesday 24th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Sunday 28th 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey
Sunday 28th 10.30am	Bluebell Walk	From PH

May

Sunday 5th .10.30am	Benefice on farm service for Rogation Sunday	Street Farm Kingsland
Wednesday 8th 7.00pm	Annual Parish Meeting	PH
Sunday 12th 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Friday 17th 8.00pm (NB date change)	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 19th 3.00pm	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Monday 20th 10.00am	Foot Health Clinic (booking required)	PH
Wednesday 22nd 7.00pm	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council	PH
Thursday 23rd 7.30pm	Refugees & Asylum Seekers talk	Aymestrey church
Sunday 26th 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey

June

Saturday 1st 6pm	Safari Supper	tba
Sunday 2nd 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Saturday 8th 12pm	Plant & Produce Sale	PH
Sunday 9th 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Friday 14th	Fun Quiz Night	tbc
Sunday 16th 3.30pm	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Monday 17th 10.00am	Foot Health Clinic (booking required)	PH
Sunday 23rd 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey
Wednesday 26th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Sunday 30th 10.30am	Benefice Service	Eardisland



Burns Night Supper



27th January 2024 ~at Aymestrey Hall

What a Day, what a Night – never a dull moment at Aymestrey Hall!! From the capture of the Haggis...or is it Haggi? to the Peelathon when so many helpers, armed with potato peelers, arrived to tackle the two large bags of tatties kindly donated by Gatley Farm; to the unscheduled afternoon RTA, in the middle of prepping the Cranachan desserts, resulting in the entrance to the Hall having to be diverted to the meeting room door, at the rear of the car park.

The evening arrival of 44 guests, some in kilts, some with a tartan nod to Rabbie Burns and the Teme Valley Young Farmers, five of whom led by James Farmer helped to serve out the food, doing an excellent job; not forgetting the magnificent Piper, David, whose Lament at the start of the evening helped us to an emotional remembrance of those who have gone before. The varied Burns recitals were entertaining.



There are so many to thank for making the Burns Night an evening to remember and our heartfelt thanks go out to you all for your support in attending and the help you gave.....and can you do it all again next year?? Perhaps try something different – a Chinese New Year celebration maybe....watch this space.

Suggestions for Events at the Hall are always welcome.

SD

Whist Drive

Thursday 4th April
2pm

Aymestrey Parish Hall

£3 per person

Cash Prize



Light Refreshments inc.

All Welcome

Wild Garlic Pesto Workshop

Saturday 6th April
10am-1pm

Aymestrey Parish Hall

£10 pp
contact
07496 180332
to book



Includes a short
walk to forage for
garlic (suitable
footwear, clothing required)

plus a jar for your pesto.

Refreshments included.

Bluebell Walk



Approx
5 miles
from



Aymestrey Parish Hall

HR6 9SU

Sunday 28th April

10.30am

Refreshments on return

Well behaved dogs on leads welcome

Weather permitting

Contact Martyn 07748 604215

Plant and Produce Sale

Saturday 8th June

12.00-3.00pm

in the Parish Hall

All proceeds to Hall Funds

Bring your spare plants
and produce to sell.

£5 per table

or Donate your surplus plants

Come along and buy from local people

Refreshments available

Book a table.

Dee ~ 07434 621260

