



Village Life

The community magazine
for Aston Clinton, Buckland
and Drayton Beauchamp
No.79 February / March 2025



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Website: www.acvillagelife.co.uk

PRODUCTION TEAM

Editor: Barbara Muston

Tel: 07970 642992

Co-editors: Fiona Skeggs & Lindy Butters

Email: Editor@acvillagelife.co.uk

Advertising Manager:

Nigel Brown Tel: 07710 565143

Email: Advertising@acvillagelife.co.uk

Distribution Organiser:

Richard Vincent Tel: 07769 033794

Email: vdistribution@outlook.com

Treasurer: Rod King

Secretary: James Adam

Editorial Consultant: Louise Rolfe

Graphic Designer: Victoria Dicken

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Front cover. Stand of trees, Aston Clinton Park
- Richard Vincent

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Aston Clinton Parish Council.

**The Editor is always pleased
to receive local news of people,
clubs and events.**

Village Life

The bi-monthly community news magazine for
Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp

I have found this issue of Village Life to be the perfect antidote to winter. It seems that once those Christmas trees were stripped and chipped (thanks to 1st Aston Clinton Scouts), you were all up, off, and raring to go! Plenty of interest, events and activities, both indoors and out – spring has most definitely sprung.

As you might expect, the Horticultural Society is quick to get us thinking all things spring, encouraging us outdoors with gardening jobs for February and March, calling for entries to the Spring Show, and providing us with four gardens well worth visiting for their snowdrop collections alone.

Calls, too, from the many other wonderful clubs, societies and groups in and around our villages ready to open their doors to new members and, indeed, volunteers. The warmth of the welcome you'll receive, is a theme that runs through all, so to quote one contributor, why not just *'give it a go!'*

From time to time, we receive articles on local history which are always of interest. Not only is there a look back over Halton's path to aviation in this issue, but also a brief reminder of just some of Aston Clinton's history, posing the wider question of whether an archive for this area could be formed to curate the past for posterity. This is an opportunity to get involved with the project from the start, so do read *An Archive for Aston Clinton* (page 24) and get in contact.

The past will be brought noisily and gloriously into the present in May with the Aston Hill Centenary Celebration which is shaping up to be an extraordinary event. For more news of the vintage cars taking part and how to get your ticket, see page 28.

And finally, have you seen Stanley the penguin? Taken by one, and missed by many, his owners, Julia and Peter Giles (page 17), are still hopeful for his safe return and urge us all to keep looking ... *Here's to that – and looking forward to those longer days and the great outdoors – enjoy!*

Lindy Butters

Aston Clinton Baptist Church



*Forget the former things;
Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing
a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not
perceive it? Isaiah 43:18-19*

Renewal

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be – or at least it needs handling with care – according to Isaiah. He was God's messenger to the destitute, exilic nation of Israel, languishing in Babylon.

His message was, "Don't escape into the past; nor seek to escape from the past, open your eyes and look to see what is now to occur."

Before their very eyes, God created new hope – a way back home. There came a benign ruler who returned the ethnically cleansed to their own land, overthrowing the seemingly indomitable enemy. The Israelites were going home. Enthralled by powerful forces, such news may have been hard to hear or believe but as time unfolded, it was found to be true.

And their truth is ours, for God does not change. If the times you live in seem to be gloomy and uncertain, may I encourage you to put your hope and trust in God who says "behold I am coming to make all things new" and that can include yourself and your circumstances if you so choose.

A prayer of Thanksgiving and trust

*Everlasting God,
We place our days within your care.
We trust and praise you for your faithfulness
in the past and your constant care.
We put ourselves into your keeping,
to guard and to guide us this day and every day;
and we offer our lives to you through Jesus Christ,
your eternal son, our Saviour. Amen*

Rev'd Nick Harris

REGULAR EVENTS AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH

*All services are live-streamed and available
for viewing via catch up on the church YouTube
channel. Follow the links on the website:
www.ACBC.church*

Sunday morning worship 10.45am – 12 noon.
The Junior Church caters for children dropped off by parents/carers; pick up from the church.

Monthly afternoon service 'Oasis' – first Wednesday of each month 2 – 3pm in the hall with familiar older hymns, companionship and a short reflection.

Various **Homegroups** meet regularly for Bible study, fellowship and prayer.

Lunch is served in the hall every Wednesday 12.45 – 1.30pm.

The Craft Club runs on alternate Wednesday mornings 10.30 – 12.30pm.

All-sorts after school club with craft, games etc; weekly on Wednesdays during term time 3.30 – 5pm in the hall.

Noah's Ark Baby & Tots runs Tuesdays during term time 9.30 – 11.00am.

The Foodbank is most active on Friday morning (preparing parcels) and Saturday mornings (delivering parcels).

Men's Full English Breakfast every first Saturday of the month 9 – 10am
Numbers are currently limited to 20.
Booking is required.

A bereavement group meets alternate Wednesday mornings from 11.30 – 12.30pm.

Youth group meeting weekly on Fridays 7 – 9pm during term time.

The hall is available for private hire.
Please see website or call for more details
www.ACBC.church
01296 631824 or 07972 770361

St Michael and All Angels Aston Clinton, All Saints' Buckland and St Mary's Drayton Beauchamp

On this page you will find the regular church services and community events that happen within our three churches.

REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

St Michael's, Aston Clinton	9.15am Family Eucharist every Sunday 6pm Evensong every Sunday
All Saints', Buckland	8am Holy Communion every Sunday 10am Midweek Communion every Wednesday 11am Messy Sunday every 2nd Sunday 11am Sung Eucharist every 3rd Sunday

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

Sunday, February 2, 4.30pm	Service for Candlemas at St Mary's Drayton Beauchamp
Sunday, March 2, 11am	Holy Communion at St Mary's Drayton Beauchamp

WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS

You can hold your wedding at any of our wonderful churches. Baptisms every 3rd Sunday 11.30am at St Michael's church and 1.30pm at All Saints' church, Time tbc St Mary's church. Please contact *Natalie Fieldhouse*.

OPENING TIMES

St Michael's and All Saints' are open daily 9am to 5pm and St Mary's is open every Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm for private prayer.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rev Sally Bottomer 01296 632488,

Rev Jane Nash 07562 672481

*Natalie Fieldhouse, Benefice Administrator
01296 632488 email all on: Benefice3@gmail.com*

Facebook: *Aston Clinton Benefice with
Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp*

Website: www.achurchnearyou.com search for:
St Michael's, Aston Clinton, All Saints' or St Mary's

Benefice Website: www.ac-buck-db-churches.org



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rhubarb Café at St Michael's
Monday 2 – 4pm (*Closed Bank Holidays*)

**St Michael's Little Angels
Toddler Group**
every Thursday 9.30 – 11am

Aston Bridge Club at St Michael's
Friday 2 – 4.30pm

**Coffee & Produce Stall
at All Saints'**
homemade cakes, bacon rolls &
preloved books on the
1st Saturday every month 10 – 11.45am

Repair Café at St Michael's
bring along your broken items on the
2nd Saturday every month 9 – 12 noon.
Refreshments available.

The Chiltern Society

The Community WildBelt Project needs you!



Are you passionate about protecting and enhancing nature? The Chiltern Society's Community WildBelt Project is looking for YOU to help make a tangible and lasting difference to the Chilterns natural landscape.

Backed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we're empowering local communities in the Wendover, Tring and Aylesbury area to lead a biodiversity revolution. Together, we'll help biodiversity recover and build connected nature pathways. At a time when nature is under increasing pressure, this innovative project is searching for:

Community WildBelt Work Party Leader – to organise and lead practical nature conservation work.

Community WildBelt Local Nature Recovery Coordinator – to work with the community and local groups to kickstart impactful nature recovery projects.

Why Volunteer?

- Make a tangible difference – see the impact of your work on biodiversity and the Chilterns' natural beauty.
- Shape your role – adapt the work based on your own skills and interests.
- Get the best support – receive full training, tools, expert guidance and reimbursement for expenses.

These roles are ideal for passionate individuals who can spare a few hours a week to make a lasting impact. Whether you're a seasoned conservation enthusiast or eager to learn, this

is your chance to join a small but mighty team committed to nature's recovery.

For more information on these roles and other volunteer opportunities please check out our website at www.chilternsociety.org.uk or email: amandabarnicoat@chilternsociety.org.uk.

St. Michael's Toddler Group



Designed by Freepik

This wonderful FREE toddler group started at St Michael's church in January 2025 and is run by Rev'd Sally Bottomer who is a qualified childminder. Everyone with babies / toddlers is welcome to attend.

Little Angels Toddler Group is held every **Thursday 9.30-11am** at St Michael's where there will be play, singing, activities and refreshments available.

We look forward to welcoming you at a session.

If you have any queries about this group, please contact **Natalie** on **01296 632488** or email Benefice3@gmail.com.

Happy New Year! A message from our vicar

I wonder what this year will hold for you – and for me, for that matter. Have you made any resolutions ... any plans? What are your hopes and dreams for 2025?

I wonder what journeys you will go on, and I don't just mean physically, but emotionally and spiritually too? Who will be with you as you travel? How will you know when you've arrived? I wonder what you will find when you get there?

Oh, how we love to plan our time, don't we? Constantly marking and measuring it too, dividing it into chunks we can hold and control. I've just bought a new wall planner for the benefice office – a giant wall planner to be exact – huge! One where I can see the whole year and plan my time and ministry accordingly. It makes both Natalie and I feel a little more secure and productive, organised in fact, when we place the little coloured stickers on those squares!

But it's a secular year planner and it would have us believe that Christmas is very much over. Fortunately, I also have a liturgical calendar in my church diary to remind me that though the world has finished festivities, the Christmas season isn't over yet. We might have put away our decorations for another year but actually there's still plenty of time to celebrate the birth of Jesus – plenty of time to enjoy the Christmas season which runs through Epiphany to Candlemas at the beginning of February.

Still plenty of time to visit the manger and whisper into the ears of the Christ child our hopes, our dreams and longings not just for ourselves, but for humanity, for our planet, for the whole of creation. Still plenty

of time to give him the gift of our heart like in the carol – In the Bleak Midwinter.

It was at the beginning of January on the feast of Epiphany we celebrated the arrival of the wise men who came to pay homage to the Christ child. They had almost nothing to go on, no wall planner in sight! No sat nav and yet they travelled a vast distance, on an adventure guided by God through the stars, through the Scriptures and through a dream.

Encountering the Christ child changes the Magi. They are warned in a dream not to report to Herod but to take a different path home. When we meet with Christ – whether at the manger, in our prayers, through reading the Bible, through communion and especially in the people we meet every day, we must expect to be changed, to find that our direction, our way home, is different. We may want to plan, mark out, and control the future with different coloured sticky dots but so often God has other plans. God's dream for humanity is beyond our wildest imagining. It may take us on different roads, way out of our comfort zones but we won't be alone on these journeys. We have God, and we have each other.

I wonder what this year will hold for you and for me? What are your hopes and dreams? What journeys will you go on – physically, emotionally, spiritually? Who will be with you as you travel? How will you know when you've arrived? What will you find when you get there, I wonder?

May God be with us all, ever illumining the way as we continue our journey into this new year ... Amen

Rev'd Sally Bottomer

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please visit our website.

acvillagelife.co.uk



Aston Clinton School

Head Teacher.: Mrs Carol Macdonald



The UK Bee Population and Our School Bees

In my last article, I highlighted the importance of children spending time in nature. Building on that, I'm excited to share the story of our school bees!

The UK bee population is critical to both the ecosystem and agriculture, yet it has faced significant declines over recent decades due to habitat loss, pesticide use, climate change and disease. With over 270 species of bees, including honeybees, bumblebees and solitary bees, these remarkable pollinators are essential for biodiversity and food production.

Bees are responsible for fertilising a wide variety of crops and wild plants. In the UK, approximately one-third of the food we consume depends on pollination, with bees leading the charge. Crops like apples, strawberries, tomatoes and oilseed rape are just a few that rely on their efforts. Without bees, the production of these crops would plummet, leading to higher food prices and reduced availability. Their contribution to UK agriculture is valued at an impressive £690 million annually.

Beyond agriculture, bees help sustain ecosystems by pollinating wildflowers, which provide habitats and food for countless other species. Their decline can have a domino effect, threatening entire ecosystems and disrupting the balance of nature.

In response to these challenges, our school decided to play an active role in supporting the UK bee population. We reached out to Alan Roberts, a passionate local beekeeper, who was thrilled to help. Alan delivered an engaging assembly, introducing the children to the world of beekeeping and the inner workings of a hive.



With Alan's guidance, we trained both staff and children to become beekeepers. Adults found the activity to be a valuable wellbeing experience, while children embarked on a hands-on learning journey. They explored the hive as a community, learned safety protocols, and monitored the bees' health from egg stages to honey production.

By summer, the children were harvesting honey-filled frames, observing the extraction process, and creating custom labels for jars. Their efforts culminated in the successful sale of our first batch of AC honey. This year, they are preparing for the new season with plans to establish a flower meadow and mentor the next cohort of young beekeepers.

Protecting bees is about more than safeguarding a species – it's about empowering future generations to understand their vital role in sustaining our environment and ensuring food security. Through our school's beekeeping initiative, we aim to inspire children to value and protect nature.

Carol Macdonald, Headteacher

Appreciation for those who do

Our villages are great places to live. We have the essentials nearby – pubs, a post office, school, shops, GP surgery, pharmacy, garage, Coffee at 108, churches and buses. Some of these rely on the support of volunteers and it is volunteers who are the very foundation of the clubs, societies and amenities we enjoy. They help make our community vibrant throughout the year.

Yet we perhaps don't think enough about how the community functions. Our parish councillors, without whom we would not have our wonderful park, the Red Kite Pavilion and community services.



The Aston Clinton Society has made an impact with the Rising Sun Meadow, the village gates and regular litter picks. Then there are the regular picker-uppers of litter operating like Wombles everywhere. The groups for parents and toddlers, the Dementia, Repair and Rhubarb Cafés are wonderful community assets.

Flix in the Stix at Buckland, concerts at Drayton Beauchamp, Open Gardens and scarecrow trails are sociable and fun. These all offer delicious refreshments made by an army of volunteers.

The Beer Festival, the Horticultural Shows, Astonbury, the community events in the park – all organised and run by armies of volunteers. Football, tennis and bowls would not take place without committed volunteers. The Facebook community is alive and well too. Our parish councillors all give invaluable time and expertise. Village Life itself, saved from closure by the amazing editorial team, is a hub of information, reports of events and interesting articles about people and life lived in our amazing villages.

So this is just to say thank you to those who volunteer and add untold value to and for our community. It is also a call to get involved. Volunteering is sociable, good for wellbeing, helps others and is probably the biggest asset any community can have.

Aston Clinton School Association

Autumn Term

A huge thank you to everyone who supported us last term by attending an event, volunteering to help us, donating a gift, joining Easyfundraising or buying a lottery ticket. Thank you to the office staff, Mr Arnold and the teachers for all their support during the term too. We raised an incredible £8555! We are overwhelmed with gratitude. This has enabled the welly storage for Opal to be built, and we have funded an Opal Wishlist as well as all the shelving for the Opal Storage.

Christmas Fayre 2024

We are so proud to announce that the Christmas Fayre raised an amazing £6862! This would not have been possible without the support of every single one of you in Aston Clinton who donated a tombola prize or a gift for the hamper, sent in some chocolate or attended the event.



Local stories
by local people

The biggest thank you goes to those who volunteered either before or at the event. A huge thank you to Sophie and Sharon who, for the first time, did some hair tinsel which was extremely popular.

Another thank you goes to all our 19 stall holders for making it a bustling and exciting Fayre and sharing their gorgeous wares with all of us to get ahead with our Christmas shopping! Also thanks to Pat and Sean from The Oak for providing the delicious food and manning the BBQ.

Next, our thanks to all the companies that sponsored a stall or donated products for us to use at the Fayre – The Boiler Blokes, Aston Clinton Dental Clinic, De Soutter Medical, Zethon, Michael Anthony, The Print Lab, Dayla, Coffee@108, Arla, Make Believe Ideas, Ben Mason's Christmas Trees, SignFirm, Tesco, The Entertainer and Aldi.

Also thank you to those who generously donated raffle prizes – Amigos Magic, Kings Farm, Game On Sports, The Goat Farm, Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Pumpkins and Pixies Photography, Bhambina Party and Crafts, Braid Maidens, Zen with Zo, Tring Sports Club, Hartwell Riding Stables, The Beauty Room by Jacqui Pearson, Bucks School Wear and Oliver Bonas.

And finally, thank you to all members of ACSA for their hard work planning this huge event. The children (and adults) seemed to have a wonderful time and there were many happy people who won raffle prizes!

Opal

The adventures never end. The day after the fayre we were back in school with George James Carpentry who was installing our new shelving for the two Opal containers and one

for ACSA. A huge thank you to him for all his hard work on a Sunday.

Spring/Summer Term

We have the Oompa Loompas busy preparing for our Wonka Chocolate Event again on Thursday, March 6. A huge thank you to Laxton Properties and The Print Lab for supporting us for this event again.

On Friday, June 27 we have planned for Gladiator Steel to visit the children at school.

Finally, we are looking into an alternative to the Bouncy BBQ on July 4 so watch this space for more details.

St Michael's Church Quiz Night

Our fundraising efforts are continuing apace and we are now, hopefully, within reach of our target and the possibility of being able to start work on the replacement of the south aisle roof as early as March this year.

However, we must continue with our fundraising and Phil Storr and I are working on a fun-packed quiz for all on Saturday, March 8 in the Anthony Hall at 7pm.

Tickets are £17.50 including a fish and chip supper. Tables will be rounds for eight or 10 people. One table has already been reserved so book your ticket or table by contacting James at james@jamesadam.co.uk or 07860 236904

Looking forward to hearing from you!

James and Phil



**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
& Oxfordshire**
Wildlife Trust

News from your local nature reserves

As I write this, we have just come out of a period of very dreary and misty weather and there is a forecast of prolonged low temperatures with some snow on the hills. However, winter brings its own special delights at the local nature reserves – flocks of visiting birds like Redwings and Fieldfares or scarce wildfowl at College Lake. Some years we see mini corvid murmurations at dusk in the Dancersend valley, as hundreds of Rooks and Jackdaws gather before roosting within the reserve.

More reliable winter sightings are the surprisingly colourful Scarlet Elfcup and Yellow Brain fungi that adorn mossy branches and twigs in dark, damp corners of Dancersend reserve. Possibly also surprising are the insects that can be found overwintering in natural shelters, especially some of the ladybirds.

Before we know it, signs of spring will be appearing – primroses and Early Dog violets – and we will be desperately watching out for bumblebees and early butterflies after such a disappointing and worrying season last year. Please get out to our reserves to welcome them! February and March is also the time when we carry out much of the crucial maintenance and management work at the reserves so you may come across groups of volunteers clearing fallen trees, cutting back scrub or repairing fences, gates and paths. We welcome additional volunteers, especially from local villages – please see www.bbwt.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities.

Our programme of monthly **Wildlife Talks** continues with Karen Thomas from the Bucks Owl and Raptor Group (BORG) covering Bringing Back the Barn Owl on Tuesday, February 18. This will be followed on Tuesday, March 18 by a social event with a quiz and surprise speaker. Both these events take place at the Memorial Hall in Great Missenden (HP16 9AE, free parking). The doors open at 7pm for refreshments and conversation, with the talks starting at 7.30pm. Admission is £5 including refreshments.



There are plenty of events for both children and family groups coming up at our flagship **College Lake Reserve**, including Tuesday Nature Tots (walking to 4 years), Young Rangers (8-11 years), Teen Rangers (11-17 years) and, during the February half-term holiday, 'Nature Explorers' Day Camps for 7-12 year olds, Pond Dipping sessions and a family event, 'Poo and other clues'. For all BBOWT events, please go to www.bbowl.org.uk/events.

*Mick Jones MBE,
Volunteer Warden at Dancersend*

Photos: Volunteer group at Dancersend; Hebridean sheep on a misty day at Dancersend; Scarlet Elfcup fungus; Yellow Brain fungus; 16-spot Ladybirds on a fencepost; 7-spot Ladybirds sheltering inside Beech mast. *Mick Jones*



A message from Laura Kyrke-Smith MP

I am delighted to write my third column for Village Life as your Member of Parliament for Aylesbury and the villages.



I have continued to be out and about across the villages I represent over the past few months, meeting residents and hearing your priorities. I enjoyed the Christmas Fair at St Michael's Church and could really feel the lovely sense of community that you have in Aston Clinton.

I have been holding "Meet and Greet" sessions in the villages that form part of Aylesbury constituency, so far in Ivinghoe, Edlesborough and Cheddington. These informal coffee mornings are fantastic opportunities for me to hear residents' feedback and ideas on how I can best support their community, and I will do one in Aston Clinton as soon as I can.

Parliament returned in January and the Government has been getting on with the work of change. In this column I will highlight two priorities that I think will make a real difference to residents here in Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp.

First, we have set out our plans for the NHS, including the plan to clear the backlog of almost 70,000 patients waiting more than 18 weeks for NHS treatment in Aylesbury constituency. With so many people waiting for treatment, it is more urgent than ever that we reform our NHS so it will always be there for you when you need it.

Our Elective Reform Plan sets out a whole system approach to hitting the 18-week referral to treatment target by the end of this Parliament. This includes opening Community Diagnostic Centres on evenings and weekends so that many more people will be able to access tests and checks while going about their daily lives, and the NHS will also increase the number of surgical hubs, which help protect planned care from the impact of seasonal and other pressures.

The plan will drive forward progress on the government's first steps commitment to deliver 2 million extra appointments in its first year, equivalent to 40,000 every week. The reforms will put patients first, harness technology to support staff and help the NHS to do things more efficiently.

I am pleased that we have provided the biggest boost to GP funding in years - an additional £889 million on top of the existing budget for general practice - and set out reforms to cut red tape and bring back the family doctor. We have also made the biggest investment into hospices and end of life care in a generation ensuring that hospices can continue to deliver the highest quality end of life care possible for their patients, families, and loved ones. The Government has announced a £100 million boost for adult and children's hospices to ensure they have the

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best physical environment for care, and £26 million revenue to support children and young people's hospices. I am taking a leading role in delivering these reforms as the government's National Health Mission Delivery Champion.

Second, we are taking action on the record levels of illegal sewage dumping we inherited from the last government. Our new Water (Special Measures) Bill introduces a significant increase in enforcement powers to end the disgraceful behaviour of water companies and their bosses. Water executives will no longer line their own pockets whilst pumping out this filth. If they refuse to comply, they will face severe penalties including criminal charges.

This Bill is a major step forward in our wider reform to fix the broken water system. The Government will outline further legislation to fundamentally transform how the water industry is run and speed up the delivery of upgrades to our sewage infrastructure to clean up our waterways for good.

I look forward to serving the people of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp in 2025. I am here to listen and to help you. The best way to reach me is on laura.kyrkesmith.mp@parliament.uk. I am also sending out a regular E-newsletter to update residents on my work. You can sign up for the mailing list via my website, www.lauraforaylesbury.org

Thank you. Laura Kyrke-Smith MP

WI

Looking back over 2024, for me, the most memorable event in our WI calendar was a visit to Stowe. In late summer, we became aware that the 'Standing with Giants' art installation, which had featured very prominently in the 80th anniversary D-Day ceremonies in Normandy would, in the autumn, be transferred to the National Trust gardens at Stowe.



In late October a group of us travelled to Buckingham and squeezed our cars into the visitors' overflow car park. From there we travelled on a land train to the opposite side of the garden's 245 acres to reach the Temple of Concord & Victory.

This monument overlooks the Grecian Valley and there we stood mesmerised by the sight of 1475 figures spread before us. Each of the life-size silhouettes of soldiers, sailors and airmen commemorates one whose life was lost on the British beaches on D-Day.

As we stood among a throng of other visitors, absolute silence prevailed and I cannot recall a more moving experience. Eventually we walked along the valley to pay tribute and show our gratitude. Then it was on through the landscaped gardens, burnished with autumn colour.

Arriving at the garden's entrance gateway we encountered two more silhouettes. These were of two Nursing Sisters, Mollie Evershed and Dorothy Field, who had lost their lives in trying to save others during the campaign. It was good to see women's roles being acknowledged whilst remembering that the roots of the WI lie back in World War 1.

We welcome new members - for more information please contact [Lin Mitchell](mailto:Lin.Mitchell@b.db.ac.wi@gmail.com) at b.db.ac.wi@gmail.com

Aston Clinton Society



We were thrilled to end 2024 on a high note when we were named as highly commended runners-up in the Good Neighbour category of the annual Proud of Bucks Awards organised by the Wendover and Villages Community Board. Our co-founder Sally Holder went along to the event in Birtton in late November to collect the certificate on behalf of the Society, and to hear about the great work being undertaken by other voluntary organisations and individuals in the local area. Sally is pictured receiving the award with Mimi Harker and Steve Bowles.

A couple of nights earlier, we held our AGM at The Bell where we were pleased to see some new faces along with those who have supported our cause since the start. There was plenty of lively discussion around the table as we shared our achievements of the last year and the future projects and initiatives we have in mind.

In the immediate term, we will be using the money from our jazz night fund-raiser to create some new infographics for the Rising Sun wildflower area, a litter bin by the bus-stop on Tring Hill, and planting out around the new village gates. We have also been granted funding by the Gib Lane Community Fund for a metal soldier silhouette and metal poppies which we will look to place on the wildflower area in November in the lead-up to Remembrance Sunday, subject to Parish Council approval.

Another of our initiatives for this year is to grow our membership so that we can continue to invest and make Aston Clinton a great place to live and visit. To help us achieve this, we are looking for someone who could spare a few hours each week to canvass for new members and take responsibility for the Society's membership.

We are also seeking someone with experience in professional fund-raising; in particular, someone who knows the processes of applying for grants and donations from charitable foundations and other organisations so that the Society can tap into funds available for the benefit of the village and community.

If either of these voluntary roles appeals to you, please contact us at info@astonclintonsociety.org.uk.

And finally, our first litter pick and village tidy-up of the new year is confirmed for **Saturday, February 8**. As usual, meet at the Red Kite Pavilion at 8.30am to collect all you need, and afterwards at Café in the Park for hot refreshments.

Local stories
by local people

Stanley the Penguin

As an older couple, perhaps we have a somewhat jaundiced view of life. All is not sweetness and light and there have always been ne'er-do-wells whose pleasure, it would seem, is to take what little joy people find and turn it on its head.

We try to keep a neat and tidy garden, as much for the passers-by as for ourselves. Yet we have had potted plants stolen in the past and more recently, theft of a feature that has aroused considerable interest from those passing by our house.



Six years ago, our eldest son rescued a damaged fibreglass (and due to be disposed of) 4ft tall Emperor penguin from the Winter Wonderland display in Hyde Park. We repaired him and ever since he has taken pride of place outside our house. Such was the interest in him

that our house became known as the Penguin House. He had to have a name so a friend suggested Stanley (as in Port Stanley in the Falklands, being probably the closest to his home in Antarctica).

Sadly, as most people will know by now, our penguin went missing during the night of December 14/15, even though his iceberg plinth was so heavy that carrying it any distance would require two people. Despite an appeal on social media and by the Bucks Herald, at the time of writing, he has not been returned.

Judging by the response from the village and further afield, Stanley has captured the hearts of many people who, like us, miss seeing him as they pass by. So great was our dismay at the loss of Stanley that our youngest son gave us a King penguin replacement named Ernest (as in Shackleton). He is not as tall, being only 30 ins, but more colourful. We hope he will bring as much pleasure as Stanley, his larger cousin, has done!



We have been touched by the response expressed since his theft and would like to thank everyone who has made such kind comments about him. We are sure Stanley would be surprised by how much he has been missed.

Please continue to look out for him.

Peter and Julia Giles

Aston Clinton Parish Council

The end of each year gives us the opportunity to look back at all that we've achieved and to say a big thank you to those volunteers and organisations that have helped us in so many ways during the year. We had a very busy year in 2024, adding more events to the calendar alongside the usual duties undertaken by our office staff and councillors, to keep our village running smoothly.

At the end of November 2024, the annual Christmas tree lighting event took place outside the Red Kite Pavilion. Once again, we were serenaded by a superb choir of children from Aston Clinton School who sang carols so beautifully. Thanks to all of the young choristers and, of course, Mrs Cole for her hard work with the choir.

Santa returned to the village over the weekend of December 21/22, ably assisted by a stalwart team of volunteers and very enthusiastic Scouts. Their enthusiasm paid off as a record sum of £1740 was collected, beating all amounts in recent years. Thank you to all our residents – old and young – who came out to say hello and donate so generously. This event in particular relies upon a large team of volunteers and supporters to run it.



Village Life is funded with support from
Aston Clinton Parish Council

Huge thanks go again to Dayla Drinks for generously providing Santa's transport along with driver Spencer, Claire Simmons for supplying the lights on the float over the past few years, the Scouts and their lovely leaders who enthusiastically collected, Merryweathers who completed an urgent generator repair, and all of the volunteers who walked with the float, rattling buckets! The monies collected will be split equally between the AC Scouts, Rennie Grove Hospice and the Chilterns Neuro Centre.

Another achievement during the 2024 growing season – our wonderful allotment holders donated a staggering 136 kg of fresh fruit and veg to the Aylesbury Vineyard Storehouse. This was an amazing effort in a difficult growing year, and a very respectable percentage of the overall donations from all of the allotments across Buckinghamshire. This initiative will be repeated in 2025, when we hope that the amount can be matched, or exceeded, given better weather conditions. Well done all!

Looking ahead into 2025, we must look carefully at our expenditure and the general trend of budget cuts from Buckinghamshire Council on up to central Government. These cuts filter down to the parish and town councils and mean that we, as a parish council, must look at different ways to raise revenue to ensure the standard and levels of services and improvements provided to the village are maintained.

One of the major areas of expense is the running of the park and the facilities offered within it. We enjoy a wonderful park in a beautiful location, and it is understandably very popular and visited throughout the year by large numbers of visitors – both local and from further afield. However, the regular expenses from grass cutting and maintaining trees and shrubs, to replacing, repairing and improving facilities such as the playpark,

MUGA, all-weather pitch, car parks etc., are always increasing. The Parish Council is now considering the introduction of car parking charges within the park for non-residents to help meet these costs.

There will be a public consultation at the Parish Council office (next to the Red Kite Pavilion) on Thursday, February 20 between 2-8pm so that we can gather the opinions and hear the thoughts of residents. If you are unable to attend this consultation, there will be an online survey available (see QR code for link), which will run from Thursday, February 6, where you will have the opportunity to make your comments. We are, of course, also available in person during office hours, and via email to answer any queries that you may have regarding the car parking consultation or any other matters.

Some of the other projects planned for this year will include conclusion of the traffic calming works, resurfacing of London Road (both undertaken by Bucks Council and subject to change) and the review of our Neighbourhood Plan – not to mention an exciting programme of events including the fantastic Aston Hill Centenary Celebration on Saturday, May 17 and our AC Family Festival on Saturday, June 14.

Residents are always welcome to join us at our public meetings – full Council usually meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 6.30pm – or at any of our committee meetings, the dates for which you can find on our website at www.astonclinton.org.uk.



These meetings are an ideal way for you to see what the parish council does, and to raise any queries or problems that you may have.

AC Colts



The Aston Clinton Colts Junior Football Club is thrilled to share some exciting updates with our community! We're now £3000 closer to our target for the New Goal Fund, which will allow us to bring in longer-lasting, better quality and easier to move equipment to benefit our players and coaches. A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed so far to this important initiative.



In November, we hosted our very first Music Quiz Night. This turned out to be a fantastic success, raising additional funds while bringing the community together for a fun-filled evening.

December saw our third annual Colts Christmas Party, and it was a blast for all the kids! The mischievous, cheeky Grinch even made a surprise appearance, adding to the laughter and joy of the day. We're especially grateful to the generous sponsors from the village who contributed to our Christmas Raffle. This year, we held our first ever digital raffle, which proved to be more efficient and also eco-friendly – an exciting step forward for our club.

As we look ahead, we're always on the lookout for sponsors to help our little club grow and ensure that every child who wants to play football can be included. We have sponsorship packages to suit a variety of budgets, from jackets, balls and bags, to support our upcoming Summer Tournament, our largest fundraiser of the year. If you or your company would like to get involved, please contact us at sponsors@acolts.com. Your support makes a real difference to our club and our community. Thank you!

Guides

1st Aston Clinton



We are looking forward to an amazing new year!

We are joining in with the Anglia Region Pyjama Party to celebrate World Thinking Day on Saturday, February 22 and of course, partaking in Shrove Tuesday and making pancakes.

March will see us doing a litter-pick around Aston Clinton and being creative with craft for Mother's Day. We are also hoping to take over a local swimming pool and inflatable assault course for a fun session.

Last term saw us going away on our first residential stay for a while, when we headed to Northern Heights activity centre in Elstree.



We had an amazing time making sweets, playing human hungry hippo and also enjoying the outdoors with wide games, and using the traversing wall and boulders. We also enjoyed a campfire with singing.

We held a bingo night for Children in Need, joined the Remembrance Parade and Christingle, plus our amazing Young Leader led a delicious gingerbread-making evening.

The Guides also had an evening learning first aid – including CPR and the use of a defibrillator, as there is now one outside our hall. *1st Aston Clinton Guides*

Scouts

1st Aston Clinton

This year's village Christmas tree recycling event was another great success. Despite the frosty -1°C conditions, 26 enthusiastic young Scouts dedicated five hours of their Saturday to collecting Christmas trees. They were joined by 13 adult volunteers, six van and trailer drivers, and one skilled tree surgeon. Together, the team covered 74 streets and visited 293 homes, gathering over 300 trees and transporting them to the Aston Clinton School playground.

The trees were chipped on site, producing two and a half trailer loads of mulch. These chippings were promptly delivered to various addresses in the village, where they will be reused as eco-friendly garden material. Special thanks, as always, go to Greg O'Callaghan for generously giving up his time to chip the trees; Alison and Darren Lewis for printing the leaflets at no cost to the group and



Paul Arnold and Aston Clinton School for kindly allowing us to use their premises. This event wouldn't be possible without the incredible generosity and support of our village. Thank you to everyone who donated their trees, volunteered their time, or supported us in other ways. Your contributions help to make this initiative a continued success.

Funds raised this year will go to St. Michael & All Angels Church and Medical Detection Dogs. We'll share the final total raised in the next issue, so stay tuned.

				3		2		
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			9		3			
	4				7		3	5
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						4		
		1		8				

Sudoku

All you have to do is fill in the squares so that each row, column and the nine small 3 x 3 squares contains the numbers 1-9.

(SOLUTION ON PAGE 32)

Aston Clinton Bowls Club

Aston Clinton has grown considerably in recent years with many new people moving into the village. In my case, it was the spring of 2021. Although I was born and brought up in Scotland, I had lived in Chester since 1978. The move to the south east was something of a step into the unknown for me.

Since I was young, I have always enjoyed a variety of sports – nowadays watching Premier League football on TV. I knew I had to get out a bit more and meet people in the village and, most importantly, get some exercise out in the fresh air. It was then that I discovered there was a bowling club within the grounds of Aston Clinton park and I thought, ‘Why not? Give it a go!’

It was one of the best decisions I ever made in my life. I have made lots of new friends in the village, and found a sport that provides gentle exercise in beautiful surroundings. It’s also relatively easy to learn.

People join bowling clubs for all sorts of reasons. One member who has lived in the village all her life told me that she wanted to meet more local people, and be more involved in the village when she retired. When she was working she didn’t get the chance to do that. Now she does and enjoys it enormously.

Bowls is a sport for all, young and old, men and women alike. We have members in their 20s, their 80s – and every decade in between. We are very welcoming to anyone who would like to give the sport a try, whether experienced or complete beginner. We provide coaching, training bowls, and equipment advice to all new members – all you need is flat shoes! Throughout the season we have friendly matches, internal turn up and play evenings, and of course our internal club competitions.



The clubhouse and green in January

Once a member, you will have access to the green most days in the afternoon and evenings to practise on your own, with a coach, or with other members. Our green is open from May to the end of September and many social events are held in our clubhouse throughout the year.

Our club relies on its members to maintain the green and its surrounds, and that helps create a great team spirit. Our Green Keeper is ably assisted by a number of members who help throughout the year. We have done a lot of work over the winter months and I am optimistic that we will have one of the best greens in Bucks next summer.

Bowls is inclusive, great fun and very social as you have time to chat with opposition team members whilst playing. It is as good as it sounds and you are very welcome to come along and try it. For more information please go to www.astonclintonbowlsclub.org. Our club registration evening will be in early April.

We would love to see you.

Robert Morrison, Club Chair

Please mention Village Life
when responding to our advertisers.

acvillagelife.co.uk

Pop-Up Art Weekend at Chilterns Neuro Centre

A much-loved local art exhibition is celebrating a remarkable milestone this year. The Chilterns Neuro Centre's annual Pop-Up Art Weekend, now in its 20th year, invites art enthusiasts, collectors and supporters of the charity to experience an extraordinary display of talent.

Taking place on Saturday, March 1 and Sunday, March 2, this free event will showcase a range of artwork including paintings, photographs, ceramics, jewellery, sculptures and more. With its welcoming atmosphere and eclectic mix of creative pieces, the exhibition offers visitors a chance to discover unique art while supporting a local charity.



Over the past two decades, the Pop-Up Art Weekend, held in partnership with the Clare Foundation, has raised an impressive £191,000 for the charity, helping to fund treatments and services for people affected by MS, Parkinson's and strokes. Each year, participating artists generously donate at least a third of their sales to the charity, creating a perfect harmony between creativity and compassion.

"We're incredibly proud to celebrate 20 years of this wonderful event," said Stella Kubale, Head of Fundraising at the Chilterns Neuro Centre. "Not only does the exhibition shine a light on talented artists from our community and beyond, it also demonstrates the power of art to bring people together and create positive change. We're grateful for the continued support of our artists, visitors and the Clare Foundation, and we're looking forward to making this year's event the best one yet."

Whether you're an art collector, a casual browser or someone looking for an inspiring day out, the Pop-Up Art Weekend is the perfect opportunity to enjoy beautiful art while making a difference.

The Pop-Up Art Weekend is **free to enter** for visitors so please do come and join us.

Opening hours:

- Saturday 1 March 10am to 5pm
- Sunday 2 March 10.30am to 4pm

For more information, go to
www.popupartweekend.org.uk

An archive for Aston Clinton

Would you be interested in seeing an archive for Aston Clinton?



Credit Buckinghamshire Archives

The idea was first raised just before the Covid pandemic but since Covid, it has rather gone into hibernation. However, we now have a chance to revive the idea and are looking for interested people to become involved.

Aston Clinton has a long and interesting history, with early records dating back to the Domesday Book in 1086. Over time, the village has been home to various famous residents, probably the most notable being the Rothschild family whose influence can

be seen in the old school building and the Anthony Hall, amongst others. We have other historic buildings like our ancient church, and let's not forget Aston Hill and its connection with Aston Martin cars. In the early twentieth century, Aston Clinton was in the news as one of the Brides in the Bath murder victims was a local girl. On a happier note, one of the first Scout groups was founded here.

We are lucky to have had several clubs and pubs in the village and these all have a story to tell. Add to these the industrial history of farming, the straw industry and the canal and you have still not exhausted our local heritage.

In addition to all of the above, there are thousands more personal stories. Even today, there are several families with local connections going back a number of generations.

The challenge now is to find a way of keeping a record of all this history. Many of the local organisations have their own records but we do not (at present) have a museum to store historic documents and items. One practical solution would be to compile a digital archive which would preserve the information for all and make it accessible for anyone, now or in the future.

Can you help?

It could be that you or your organisation have some old documents or photos that you would like to have copied and shared. Perhaps you have some interest or experience in copying or cataloguing the records.

If you would like to know more about what is involved please contact either [Craig Revie](mailto:craigrevie@gmail.com) at craigrevie@gmail.com 07773 428259 or [Richard Vincent](mailto:richardvincent1952@gmail.com) at richardvincent1952@gmail.com 07769 033794.

For a digital version of Village Life
please visit our website.

acvillagelife.co.uk

Halton's Flying Evolution

The first recorded military aviation at Halton took place in 1913 when the then owner of the Halton Estate, Alfred de Rothschild invited 3 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps to conduct manoeuvres on his land.

Then, following a Gentleman's agreement between Rothschild and Lord Kitchener, the estate was used by the British Army throughout the whole of the First World War. They were followed by the Royal Flying Corps, who moved its air mechanics school from Farnborough, Hampshire to Halton in 1916. This became a permanent arrangement in 1917 when the school was accommodated in workshops built by German POWs.

The whole estate was purchased by the British Government for the recently established Royal Air Force at the end of the First World War for £112,000. In 1919, Lord Trenchard established the No.1 School of Technical Training at RAF Halton for RAF aircraft apprentices. That same year, Halton House – a French-style mansion built for Lord Rothschild – was reopened as the Station's Officer's Mess. The School remained at the station until it moved to RAF Cosworth in the early 1990's.

During the Second World War, RAF Halton continued its training role. Additionally, 112 Squadron and 402 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force were based at Halton for part of the war.

Princess Mary's RAF Hospital was opened in 1927 as a large military hospital. Many in the local villages remember the hospital well, as non-military personnel were able to receive treatment there. The medical services provided were excellent and the quality of the food was always superior to any NHS Hospital.

However, in 1995 the hospital closed, although buildings remained on the site until 2007–2008 when they were demolished, making way for the Princess Mary Gate housing development.

The history of the RAF Station and specifically apprenticeship training over the years, is preserved at the Trenchard Museum located at RAF Halton, and managed by the RAF Halton Apprentices' Association.

RAF Halton is currently subject to a development review and we need to ensure that through support from local residents, the future of the Trenchard Museum is guaranteed – even if it needs to be relocated from its existing site.

See www.trenchardmuseum.org.uk/ for more information. *Mike Collins*

Aston Clinton Ladies Group

Wednesday, February 19, 8pm Talk from Penny Abbott about her own novel on a Victorian family. There will be copies of her book available to purchase. Raffle, tea, coffee and biscuits served after the talk.

Wednesday, March 19, 8pm

Flower arrangements made by Val Truby in aid of Florence Nightingale Hospice. All flower arrangements will be raffled off at the end and all monies given to the hospice. Raffle, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Both events will be held in the Aston Clinton Guide Hall (opposite the Shell Garage).

Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings – a small contribution of £3 can be paid on the evening if you are a non-member.

If you are interested in joining please contact *Sue Sanders 01296 630740* or *Janet Watson 01296 631014*.

Village People

This is a series about the people of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp. Not just about the people who live in these villages but the people who are a part of the daily life of the villages.

Rowena Dean fundraiser for the Chilterns MS Centre.

Q. How long have you been a fundraiser for the Chilterns MS Centre and when and why did you first become interested in their work?

A. There has been an art event at the Centre for nearly 20 years albeit on a smaller scale than today. A friend of mine started as CEO at the Centre and contacted my husband 10 years ago. He knew Martin had a love of art and I came as part of the package! I loved the idea of being able to highlight local art talent and fundraise for a very special cause. I'd worked in the charity sector since 1989 but was unaware of this wonderful local facility offering therapeutic services to people with Multiple Sclerosis.

Q. Every year you arrange a pop-up art exhibition at your Halton site. This is a special year for the event so how will you be celebrating?

A. Each year the exhibition grows and changes, and the amount we raise for the

Centre increases. Last year, we raised over £21,000. We are marking the anniversary with some special initiatives during the Pop-Up Art Weekend. Each artist has been invited to submit an additional 20 x 20cm small artwork which will sell for £20. We are also featuring the original event team as far as we can.

Q. How long have you lived in Aston Clinton and where did you live previously?

A. I grew up in North London and knew very little about village or rural life so it was quite a life change moving to Tring when I got married – a real 'townie' for quite a few years while I commuted into London. We moved to Aston Clinton in 1975 when I was very pregnant with our son. We are still in the same house all these years later.



Q. Can you also tell us about your previous involvement with the charity sector locally?

A. In 1989, I had taken time off work to do an accountancy course; I 'fell' by chance as a volunteer into the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home family and my working life changed completely. I subsequently started working for them and eventually moved into the role of Chief Executive. It was a privilege to work with skilled and dedicated nursing teams, support staff and volunteers, and see the charity grow to care for so many people across Bucks and Herts. I retired from Iain Rennie in 2008 but my heart is still with the charity.

One of my fondest memories was when I persuaded the contractors of the Aston Clinton bypass to give us a

day on the road before it opened so we could hold a fundraiser for Iain Rennie. There were a number of Aston Martins there offering rides and I got to be a passenger on a Harley thanks to a local Chapter!

Q. Are you involved with any other local organisations?

A. I am a member of Aston Clinton u3a and run a monthly book club. In the past, I've been a Parish Councillor and member of the parent group at the school.

I'm a committee member of The Arts Society Tring Park which features an expert arts lecturer every month. We also organise trips to places with an arts emphasis, from cathedrals and stately homes to major art galleries.

I love being part of the Rhubarb café team at the church. It's such a great community meeting place. I often hear the world being put to rights over a cup of tea and a piece of coffee and walnut cake!

Q. If you have any time left over, what are your hobbies, what do you do for fun?

A. I enjoy weekly Pilates, socialising with friends, art galleries, theatre and film.

Q. What's your favourite music?

A. Oh, music is with me all the time and I go to as many live gigs as I can – Coldplay and Justin Timberlake being a couple of memorable ones. My taste ranges widely from classical, blues, and all the genres. We try to get to the Blues Bar in Tring each month, and the Stables at Wavenden has a brilliant programme. I sing in a weekly choir – more rock than choral but enormous fun.

Q. What's your favourite film?

A. That's a hard one – I think it will have to be West Side Story (the original one, although the re-make is exceptionally good). I have just seen 'Conclave' which is sensational.

Q. What changes to village life (good or bad) have you noticed in recent years?

A. More local housing is clearly needed and our village should not be excluded from this growth but I guess like many local people, I worry about the lack of a corresponding increase in infrastructure such as the school and surgery.

The Park is a wonderful asset that the village should be enormously proud of.

Last year,
we raised over
£21,000

“

Aston Clinton u3a offers great opportunities to people in the village. I am sure it has something for everyone.

The opportunity to drink great coffee in the village which was certainly not the case when I first moved here.

It was a great day when the bypass opened all those years ago and I could get out of the end of Green End Street!

Q. What changes would you like to see locally?

A. My children benefited from a village school that they could walk to every day and they are still in touch with friends they made all those years ago. I regret that the school hasn't been able to take advantage of all the development and move to a larger site so that it can grow with the local population.

If there is anyone whose contribution to village life you believe should be featured in a forthcoming issue of Village Life, please send details to Editor acvillagelife.co.uk

*Interview **Richard Vincent***



Aston Hill Centenary Celebration

The Aston Hill Centenary in May 2025 is shaping up to be a very special occasion, with interest in the event continuing to grow rapidly over recent months. There has been significant media coverage, including a feature article in Classic Car Weekly.



Photos: 1921 Bentley, 1922 Aston Martin TT1, 1914 Vauxhall A Type and 1925 Pinhard.

On Saturday, May 17, Aston Hill will be the focal point for motoring enthusiasts from all over the country, when hundreds of vintage and classic cars and motorcycles will attend a one-off event to celebrate the wonderful history of the hill, 100 years after the last event was held there.

The main element of the event is the vintage and classic vehicle show in the grounds of Hill Farm at the top of Aston Hill. This show will feature pre-1980 cars and motorcycles from British and European manufacturers. Show tickets are selling quickly, and so those interested in attending, either as exhibitor or visitor, are encouraged to obtain their ticket soon. All profits will benefit the event's nominated charities. These include two local organisations, the Chilterns Neuro Centre which supports people affected by multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's and stroke, and Kirby's Herd which fund-raise for Cancer Research UK.

Aston Hill was one of the country's premier motorsport venues during the early years of the sport, with major events held there from 1904 to 1925. A parade of approximately 70 rare cars and motorcycles from this period will take place on the morning of 17 May, starting in Aston Clinton Park and ending at the show at the top of Aston Hill. Amongst the participating cars will be some that actually competed at Aston Hill over 100 years ago.

At the Herts County Auto & Aero Club Open Hillclimb on 16 September 1922, two of the fastest cars were the 1921 Bentley TT driven by W.G. Barlow and the 1922 Aston Martin TT1 driven by Bertie Kensington Moir. Both of these cars still exist today and they will be reunited at Aston Hill in May, 103 years after they last participated there.

It is interesting to note that Aston Martin TT1, also known as 'Green Pea', raced at the French Grand Prix in Strasbourg in July 1922,



when it was driven by Count Louis Zborowski, prior to competing at Aston Hill. Zborowski is perhaps best known as the owner and driver of the famous aero-engined cars known as “Chitty-Bang-Bangs”, which provided the inspiration for Ian Fleming’s children’s story, “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang”.

Several more pre-1926 Aston Martins and Bentleys will be participating in the parade, along with cars from many other manufacturers that competed at Aston Hill in the period. These will include Maudsley, Talbot, Vauxhall, Ford, Sunbeam, Crossley, Rover, Singer, Hispano-Suiza, Alvis, GN, Bugatti, AC, Morris, Panhard and Austin. Vintage motorcycles will include BAT, Triumph, Sunbeam, AJS, DOT and Henley. A commemorative event programme will be produced for the event that will list all the participating cars and motorcycles. Several local companies have already booked advertising space in this programme, and if others would like to do so then please email the organising

team at astonhill100@gmail.com

In the days leading up to the centenary event on May 17, there will be an exhibition showcasing the history of Aston Hill and featuring many period photographs of the cars, motorcycles, drivers and riders that competed there. This exhibition will be housed in the Red Kite Pavillion in Aston Clinton Park from Wednesday, May 14 to Saturday, May 17.

In addition to the event’s two primary sponsors, vintage Aston Martin experts Ecurie Bertelli and protective food supplement brand Immun’Age, the event is being supported by two local car specialists, namely Chiltern Aston and Bicester Sports & Classics. We are extremely grateful for their support.

For more information about the Aston Hill Centenary please visit the event website www.astonhill100.com and the event facebook page Aston Hill Climb 100 Celebration.

Mike Stark, Chair, Aston Hill Centenary Organising Committee

Buckland Parish Council

Thames Water Pumping Station

In December, members of Buckland Parish Council met with representatives from Thames Water to discuss the delays they are experiencing with the pumping station project and Thames Water confirmed there will be nothing happening to the Buckland Booster Station in the next 6-12 months. They have agreed to give BPC an update towards the end of March..

Hedges, Ditches and Verges

Buckland Parish Council has been working with local residents and landowners to ensure that hedges and ditches remain clear through the winter months. We encourage all owners to ensure that ditches and verges are cleared regularly as this helps to keep the drainage systems working throughout the village and prevent flooding further down the village.



Community Orchard

In December, Buckland Parish Council took delivery of three benches for the Community Orchard which have now been installed. We also installed a new gate to the orchard which will make it accessible to all. These two projects were funded by the Gib Lane Community Fund. Over the next few months we will be planting 16 trees funded by Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp Horticultural Society, and creating a wildflower meadow funded by Wendover Community Board.

Community Notice Boards

Residents may also be aware that we have refurbished both community noticeboards – one by Buckland Village Hall and one at Buckland Wharf. The refurbishment was carried out by Wendover Shed. Wendover Shed is a project to establish a community workspace in Wendover where practically-minded people are able to meet, work on joint projects (or their own) and share ideas and experience. The noticeboard costs were covered by a grant from Wendover Community Board.

Local Elections

Elections will be held on Thursday, May 1 for councillors for Buckinghamshire Council. On the same date, and if there are more nominees than places available, there will be an election for councillors to represent Buckland Parish Council. If there are fewer or the same number of nominees as places, no election for the parish council will be held. The local polling station will be Buckland Village Hall. For more information about standing as a parish councillor, the election and timetable for nominations, please visit the Buckinghamshire Council website and search 'local elections'. Nominations for parish councillors will need to be submitted by Friday, April 11.

Aston Clinton u3a

Another year has flown past and yet again we have all experienced mysteries and puzzlement. This has varied from world politics to climate change and local weather.



With the weather, we did have one two-week dry spell, but generally there was far more rain, and who would have believed that we would get snow in November and a relatively warm Christmas? All of these have impacted Aston Clinton u3a activities in various ways.

Aston Clinton u3a has had an eventful year with most of our groups busier than ever and yet others have become quieter or almost non-existent. We are always looking for new interests and everyone in the greater Aston Clinton district is very welcome. Even if you have looked at the website and not found your particular interest, we would be delighted to hear from you to see if we can help form another interest group. Do get in touch with the Chairperson, or the Groups coordinator via the website links and we hope you will join us.

Of the mainstay groups, Science & Technology ended the year with a very convivial Christmas lunch held at The Chiltern Golf Club. The camaraderie was very evident and the meal was excellent. S&T will continue to meet in the Aston Clinton Bowls Club as per the website and already has an interesting programme lined up for the whole year.

Other groups are looking for more members to maintain enthusiasm. One of these is the Wildlife group which has an interesting programme, but needs new members. So, if you have any interest in nature, wildlife and the countryside, do come and get involved. Again, please use the website to get in touch.

Our recent trips have been very successful and although the visit to the Winter Lights at Kew Gardens will be a distant memory, I hope this picture is a good reminder. The regular trip to London museums took place in January. It is a great way to get into the metropolis without the hassle of public transport or parking. Called "The Museum Trip" (that is just the location for the bus drop off and pick up in South Kensington), our members were free to explore London as they wished during the day.

Upcoming events include the Return to the 50s/60s Dance held in the Anthony Hall on Friday, February 28 and then the St. George's Day Lunch on Sunday, April 27 (nearest Sunday to St George's Day). Early booking is recommended for both of these and details are again on the website at www.astonclintonu3a.co.uk.



I mentioned earlier that the year has been odd with the weather and I wondered if anyone else had daffodils in the garden on Christmas Day? *I hope I'll get another variety blooming on March 1 to please our Welsh colleagues!*



Westongrove has a new patient appointment system

Back in January, our email address was replaced by a new system which allows patients to contact us via the homepage on our website www.westongrove.com. As our patient survey suggested, we also discontinued using Ask First.

Why are we doing this?

New regulations require GP Practices to change the way appointments are offered to patients, with the main goal being *'to provide the right care, to the right patient, at the right time'*

Improved Access

We understand the need for improved access. Our goal is to inform all patients who contact us with a clinical query before 4pm about the next steps within the same day. Additionally, we aim to address all administrative queries within 24 hours, eliminating the need for multiple contacts.

Whether you contact us by phone, online, or in person, all requests will be managed through an access portal, enabling us to prioritise your needs effectively.

Same-day clinical assessment

Clinical queries submitted before 4pm will be reviewed by our clinical team on the same day and you will be informed of the next steps.

Prioritisation

The system will help identify urgent symptoms or conditions, ensuring that those with the most pressing needs are prioritised.

Data-driven staffing

The system will provide insights into the types of consultations we handle, allowing us to adjust our staffing to best meet patient needs.

Optimise GP Time

Not all clinical matters require a GP's direct attention. By directing appropriate queries to other qualified clinical professionals, GPs can focus on patients who truly need their expertise.

Telephone system update

Our new telephone system and number **01296 320384** went live on December 11.

Since then, we have answered a huge 6381 calls with the average call time of 2 minutes 39 seconds.

The callback facility is very popular with 1243 successful callbacks – saving patients time waiting in the telephone queue.

7473 callers queued to be answered and the average length of time in the queue was 6 minutes 56 seconds.

We hope that the new facilities offered on our new telephone system coupled with the new appointment system will have a positive impact on our patients' experience.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

9	1	4	8	3	5	2	7	6
6	2	8	4	7	9	1	5	3
7	5	3	2	1	6	9	8	4
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5	7	6	9	4	3	8	2	1
8	4	9	1	2	7	6	3	5
2	9	7	3	6	4	5	1	8
3	8	5	7	9	1	4	6	2
4	6	1	5	8	2	3	9	7

Happiness is Scottish Country Dancing

The Autumn term was rounded off in great style with our popular Christmas Dance. Our marvellous band provided some thrilling music spurred on by the joy emanating from the dance floor. We were joined by eight dancers from our (new) twin club in Jerez, Spain, who not only participated with energy and enthusiasm, but enjoyed the hospitality of our own dancers during their stay. The twinning arrangement is a new venture for both clubs and one of our teachers has already visited Jerez to offer tuition. We look forward to discovering how the arrangement can be developed to our mutual benefit.

The Ceilidh Dance we held in November in aid of St Michael's Open House Project was such a success that we've been asked to run another! Just over 70 people attended and were



soon tempted on to the floor by the wonderful music of Ian and Tom Robertson, our talented local musicians. Some skilful MC-ing by one of our teachers kept everyone in order! We were delighted that over £900 was raised for the church funds.

This amount can be added to our other fundraising efforts for our own Charity of the Year, Bank Farm Riding for the Disabled, which brings this term's total to around £1400. In addition, we've continued to donate items to the Chiltern Food Bank. This reflects the generosity of our dancers who are very happy to fundraise while they dance!

By the time you read this, tuition will have resumed for both our classes but there will still be time for new dancers to join our Beginners' Class. Scottish country dancing is particularly good for physical and mental fitness, so if you want to improve yours in the year ahead, please join us. We're a welcoming bunch, eager to help and would love to share the joy of dancing with you.

You can book a place in our Beginners' Class via our website, which contains useful information about class content, teaching videos and photographs too.

Liz Mitchell,
lucyclarkscottish@gmail.com
www.lucyclarkscottish.org



Horticultural Society

A belated welcome to 2025! Already snowdrops are out, shoots for spring bulbs are appearing in our gardens, and now is the time to plan our gardening year. Time to think about new projects, what seeds to sow and new plants to buy. The Society has a full programme of talks, plant sales and events throughout the year to help inform and inspire these decisions. We also have our popular Spring and Summer Shows. Full details can be found on our website at www.astonclintonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk.

You can also look out for information on our Facebook page. Membership is just £5 per year and gives free entry to all our talks. Non-members are also welcome to attend for just £2 a meeting. Please get in touch by email to join: info@astonclintonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk.

Monthly talks

Held in the Anthony Hall on the second Wednesday of the month, starting at 7.30pm. Covering various gardening topics, upcoming events include:

February 12 – Talk by the head gardener at Ashridge House, where there are 190 acres to explore, including the Italian garden, the rose garden and ancient yews. Whilst we may not be gardening on such a scale, the very largest of gardens provide ideas we can take away to apply on our own smaller scale.

March 12 – Talk on seasonal planting by local gardener Edwin Rye, which is certain to provide lots of ideas for interest in the garden all year round.

April 9 – Talk on “Bees & Wannabees” by John Catton of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (www.bumblebeeconservation.org).

April 10 – Spring Show entry night from 6pm-7.45pm at the Anthony Hall.

April 12 – Spring Show at Aston Clinton School featuring daffodils, spring flowers, flower arrangements, cookery, and handicrafts.

Why not come along and enjoy looking at the beautiful daffodil blooms that will be on display – you will be amazed at the wide variety that can be grown. It's not too late for a New Year's resolution to put in an entry yourself this year! Full details of all the entry options will be on our website soon and will include classes for beginners and children. If you are uncertain which classes your daffodil blooms fit into, our keen daffodil growers are able to advise.

Gardening Tips

February

- After snowdrops bloom, it's an ideal time to divide and replant them, sharing any surplus with friends and family.
- Winter-flowering shrubs can be pruned after flowering and herbaceous perennials and grasses can be divided to create new plants.
- Cleaning greenhouse glass will let in the maximum amount of light later in the year.
- If you are feeling romantic as Valentine's Day approaches, it's not too late to give a rose plant this year, as bare-rooted plants and those in containers can still be planted out, provided the ground is not frozen or waterlogged. With care, a plant will give joy for years, rather than a bunch lasting just a few days.

March

- Start preparing your soil for planting by removing any weeds and adding compost or mulch to improve its quality.
- Prune any dead or damaged branches on trees and shrubs to encourage healthy growth.
- Check your garden tools and equipment to make sure they are clean, sharp, and in good working condition.

- Begin sowing seeds indoors for plants such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers which require a longer growing season.
- Keep an eye on the weather forecast and protect tender plants from late frosts by covering them with fleece or cloches.
- Plan your vegetable garden layout and start sowing seeds outdoors for crops like peas, lettuce and radishes.

Snowdrop Splendour

February is the best time to see snowdrops, so we have re-published below a number of the gardens nearby that are renowned for their snowdrop collections including:

Thenford, near Banbury

Grown in Thenford's woodlands and churchyard for decades, snowdrops carpet the ground with a wash of white flowers each February. The collection has been expanded over the years and there are now over 600 species and cultivars. The garden is owned by the Heseltine family and is open on limited dates during the year, with four open days in February. Check the website www.thenfordarboretum.com for further information and ticket availability.

Benington Lordship, near Stevenage

Benington Lordship's grounds come alive in February with winter-flowering shrubs, hellebores, and naturalised snowdrops. The Norman keep and moat create a lovely background with acer, cornus, and willow stems in various colours. A century-old planting, the snowdrop path presents a striking show of common and double snowdrop species. The centrepiece of the exhibit is an assortment of both common and unusual snowdrops. For further information and open days, see www.beningtonlordship.co.uk.



Stowe, Buckinghamshire

Designed by Capability Brown, this picture-perfect Georgian garden is swathed in snowdrops in February – so much so, the National Trust has called them 'Stowedrops'. Explore recently reinstated paths through Lamport Garden and enjoy views across the lakes and beyond. Quote from National Trust website not verified by the Society, so some feedback would be good for 2026.

Waddesdon Manor

Waddesdon has an enchanting display with its 120,000 Galanthus bulbs – again not verified by the Society so some feedback would be good for 2026.

You can find more local gardens that are open during winter/early spring on the National Garden Scheme website: www.ngs.org.uk.

Looking forward to meeting you all in 2025.

The Horticultural Committee



Let's all grow together in 2025

There are times when life seems anything but a smooth journey. Challenges to our mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing lie around every corner, and simply hanging on to what we have can seem beyond us.

At Lindengate, gardening and nature-based activities help people to manage depression, anxiety and other mental health difficulties as well as supporting people with memory loss and dementia. It is a place where everyone makes a difference, helping to grow the amazing garden and helping to grow others, and themselves. In 2024, we helped over 2,500 people through our wellbeing programmes, volunteering sessions and open garden sessions. Without support from our amazing team of staff and volunteers, donations, grants and gifts in kind, none of this would have been possible.

Hear how Lindengate supported Annette, James and one of our Green Volunteers in 2024.

Annette's Story



Lindengate's 9-week Wellbeing & Nature Course has been my 'saving grace' this year. It has renewed my self-belief and confidence, lifting my depression, and opening up my love

for nature. It gave me the confidence to enrol as a volunteer, giving me a sense of belonging and taught me new skills. Feels like belonging to a big, happy family, giving me full support and a lot of fun!

James's Story

When I started volunteering with you my relationship had broken down and I'd left my family home. Being able to come over to the gardens each week was a life saver, giving me something to do during a period when I was emotionally very low and struggling. I have now started to rebuild my relationship with my partner and the children. Thank you for your support – everyone made me feel so welcome.

A Parent's Story

My daughter has been a Green Volunteer at Lindengate for two years. The calming environment helped her to get through some really tough times in her life – the ongoing bereavement of her dad and grandma, bullying, self-harming, eating disorder, and neurodiversity issues. Coming to Lindengate has helped to give her back her self-belief, confidence, and to trust again. I am proud to say that she is now in college which she loves, something I never thought I would hear her say.

Find out more about our wellbeing programmes and short courses at: www.lindengate.org.uk/wellbeing-programmes.

Volunteering

The gardens are maintained by a large community of over 130 garden volunteers aged from 13 to over 90 but we always welcome more pairs of hands! If you would like to join a warm and friendly volunteer community, meet new friends, working together to support the wellbeing of people and the environment and help us maintain the beautiful six acre Lindengate gardens, then get in touch.



We have a variety of volunteering opportunities and would love to hear from you. Find out more at: www.lindengate.org.uk/volunteer.

Rest & Refresh Café Dates for 2025

Throughout the spring and summer we will be running our Saturday pop-up 'Rest & Refresh' café. Come along and enjoy a stroll around our garden and nature reserve followed by a cup of tea and cake! During these sessions we also have additional activities planned.

- **April 19:** 1-3pm, *Easter Egg Hunt*
- **May 17:** 1-3pm, *wildlife activities*
- **June 21:** 1-3pm
- **July 19:** *Music from the Old Time Pickers*
- **August 16:** *Performances from the Cracklewick Morris Dancers*
- **September 20:** *Wildlife activities*

Forever Flowers 2025

Remember a loved one this spring with a Precious Pink Peony



Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity has partnered with the magnificent Waddesdon Manor to launch a very special Forever Flowers event to celebrate and remember loved ones this spring.

A stunning, temporary display of 1200 bespoke metal pink peonies will be installed in the Rose Garden at Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury in April. Each flower will represent the life, love and memories of a loved one.

The Charity is offering you the opportunity to be a part of this event by dedicating one of these limited Precious Pink Peonies, and attending a private viewing of the display on **Monday, April 28**. The installation will then remain on display to the public for three weeks. Once the installation is removed, those who have dedicated a flower will be able to take it home as a forever keepsake.

By dedicating a Precious Pink Peony, you will help us to provide compassionate local hospice care and be there for more patients and families across Buckinghamshire and its borders.

For more information and to dedicate a Precious Pink Peony visit www.fnhospice.org.uk/foreverflowers or call 01296 429975.

Pension Plan Consolidation

Combining a number of Personal Pension Plans into one is commonplace nowadays. Here are some reasons why some people do it:

Less Hassle

Juggling multiple pension accounts can be a headache. By putting them all together, you only have one account to keep an eye on, making everything easier to review and manage.

Save on Fees

Different pension plans often come with different fees, some older plans can be expensive so consolidating into one plan with lower fees, might save money, helping your retirement savings grow more efficiently.

Simplified Investing

When all your pension money is in one place, you can develop a more focused investment strategy. No more trying to figure out different approaches for different accounts.

Clearer Retirement Picture

Having one pension account gives you a clearer view of how much you've saved for retirement, making it easier to plan your future.

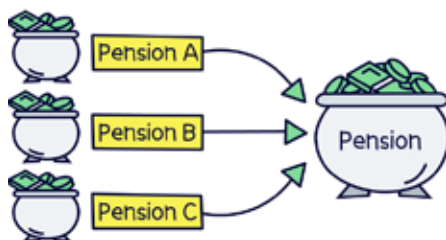
Don't Lose Track

It's easy to forget about old pension accounts, especially if you've had multiple jobs. Consolidating reduces the chance of losing track of any of your money.

Better Options

Modern pension plans often have better investment choices or benefits than older ones. By consolidating, you might gain access to those better options.

Pension consolidation



Easy Withdrawals

When it's time to start withdrawing your pension, doing it from one account is much simpler and less confusing than managing several.

Simplified Inheritance

If something happens to you, having a single pension account makes it easier for your loved ones to manage your pension money according to your wishes.

If you are considering consolidating, it's important for every plan you have be reviewed separately and on their own merits as there could be valuable benefits on some which would be lost if transferred. We spend a lot of our time analysing plans and providing advice on pension plan consolidation, which often gives our clients very useful information on how their future looks financially. We make no charge for an initial conversation and/or meeting and there is no obligation to use us so if you have built up pensions that you are not sure how to best manage, call us for an informal chat.



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Whichever way you currently use your broadband in Aston Clinton, the chances are your need for faster and more reliable broadband is only set to increase. That's because as the digital world expands, the less likely it is that your existing part fibre broadband will cope with the demands on it.

You see, the part fibre that you're likely on, is inherently slower and less reliable because fibre optic cables only go as far as a cabinet in your community, after which your broadband travels to your home along out-dated Victorian-era copper telephone wires. In contrast, Gigaclear's 100% full fibre is up to 15 times faster and five

times more reliable because our fibre optic cables go direct to your property.

And for many of you reading this in Aston Clinton, you'll be pleased to learn our full fibre cables are already outside your property - so all you have to do is call our friendly Oxfordshire-based team to arrange an installation.

As for the reason you may want to switch? Well, it's likely you'll find you can enjoy your rocket-fast broadband for less money than you are currently paying!

And for anyone* with a landline telephone, Gigaclear offers Home Phone, its digital phone service, with packages starting at only £5 per month - and no monthly line rental charges. And you can keep your existing telephone number!

Want to find out more?

Visit gigaclear.com or call 0370 774 0514

*Please note: we do not recommend you purchase home phone if you are reliant on your landline due to disability or accessibility requirements and do not have alternative means to contact emergency services in the event of a power outage.

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Aston Clinton Dental Clinic	01296 323090	www.astonclintondentalclinic.co.uk
Amersham Hospital	01494 434411	www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
John Radcliffe Hospital	01865 741166	www.ouh.nhs.uk/hospitals/jr/
Stoke Mandeville Hospital	01296 315000	www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
Wycombe Hospital	01494 526161	www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
NHS Direct	111	111.nhs.uk
Samaritans	116123	jo@samaritans.org

ENERGY SUPPLIERS

Electricity Emergency	0800 7838 838	
Gas Emergency	0800 111 999	
Water Emergency	0800 3169 800	

CRIME

Police Emergency	999	
Police non-emergency and Neighbourhood watch	101	www.thamesvalley.police.uk
Childline	0800 111	

Organisations *Any error or omission in this list should be notified to the Editor.*

EDUCATION

Aston Clinton School	01296 630276	www.astonclintonschool.co.uk
Aston Clinton Pre School	07928 309321	pre-school.acpsmanagement@gmail.com
Noah's Ark (AC Baptist Church)	01296 631824	www.acbc.church

SPORT AND LEISURE

Aston Bridge Club	01296 630552	astonbridgeclub@gmail.com
Aston Clinton Badminton Club	07958 479690	
Aston Clinton Bowls Club	07885 595447	www.astonclintonbowlsclub.org
Aston Clinton Colts Junior F.C.	07786 908219	clubsecretary@accolts.com
Aston Clinton F.C.	07930 925840	www.astonclintonfc.co.uk
Aston Park Tennis Club	01296 630826	www.astonparktennis.co.uk
Aston Wine Club	01296 630531	www.astonwineclub.co.uk
Aylesbury Green Park Sub Aqua Club	07092 075004	www.aylesburydivers.org.uk
Back to Netball	07545 033986	net4alluk@hotmail.com
Buckland & Aston Clinton Cricket Club	01296 631788	www.bacc.play-cricket.com
Colts Kickers Liam Hickey	07585 119066	
Buckland Book Group	01296 631111	brfletcher@hotmail.co.uk
Dolphin Swim School	07966 450458	dolphinswimschool2017@gmail.com
Swimezee	01296 730742	www.swimezee.co.uk

YOUTH GROUPS

Aston Clinton Guides, Brownies and Rainbows		www.girlguiding.org.uk
Aston Clinton Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers	01296 708158	
– Waiting Lists		ac.secretary@yahoo.com
– Other enquiries		ac.gsl@yahoo.com
Aston Clinton Youth Club		astonclintonyouthclub@yahoo.com

CHURCHES

St Michael and All Angels, Aston Clinton	01296 632488	www.ac-buck-db-churches.org
All Saints, Buckland	01296 632488	www.ac-buck-db-churches.org
St Mary the Virgin, Drayton Beauchamp	01296 632488	www.ac-buck-db-churches.org
Aston Clinton Baptist Church	01296 631824	www.acbc.church
Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church	01296 290545	www.ourladyoflourdes.uk

HALLS FOR HIRE

Anthony Hall	07443 976639	hallbookingonline.com/anthonyhall/
Baptist Church	07834 772937	lettings@astonclintonbaptist.org
Buckland Village Hall	07749 041434	hallandbookingsmanager@bucklandvillagehall.com
Churchill Hall		astonclintonyouthclub@yahoo.com
Red Kite Pavilion	01296 630270	nick@yourcafeinthepark.co.uk

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Aston Clinton Parish Council	01296 631269	clerk@astonclinton.org www.astonclinton.org.uk
Buckland Parish Council	01296 630962	clerk@buckland-pc.gov.uk www.buckland-pc.gov.uk
Drayton Beauchamp. Parish Meeting	01296 630396	merylnodes2018@gmail.com
Buckinghamshire Council	0300 131 6000	www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk
BC Councillors	Bill Chapple OBE	Bill.Chapple@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
	Mike Collins	Mike.Collins@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
	Julie Ward	Julie.ward@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Environmental Health (fly tipping)	01296 585605	
Highways	01296 486630	www.buckscc.go.uk
MP for Aylesbury	Laura Kyrke-Smith	laura.kyrkesmith.mp@parliament.uk

MISCELLANEOUS

All Saints Friends, Buckland	01296 630454	peter.elwin@elwins.net
Aston Clinton Ladies Group	01296 630740	
Aston Clinton U3A		www.astonclinton.u3asite.uk
Horticultural Society	01296 633376	www.astonclintonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk
Royal British Legion	01296 632039	
SSAFA Forces Help	01296 631030	
Churchill Lunch Club	07921 172642	
Turpins Charity	01296 630162	www.turpinscharity.org.uk
Wendover Heights Veterinary Centre	01296 623439	www.whvc.co.uk
Women's Institute	01296 706908	b.d.ac.wi@gmail.com

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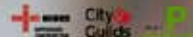
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