



Village Life

The community magazine
for Aston Clinton, Buckland
and Drayton Beauchamp

No.81 June / July 2025



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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

Over the past couple of months we've had numerous gloriously sunny days, a handful of gloomy overcast "typical English weather" days, and, for me, many sleepless nights and garden frolics with my new puppy, Juno. But, what we haven't had – and desperately need – is some rain; this spring may be the driest on record.

That being said, I'm sure everyone was grateful that there wasn't a raindrop in sight for the Aston Hill Centenary celebrations on Saturday, May 17. It was a blustery morning as the classic cars and motorcycles gathered in the village, and a large crowd sent the procession off in style. In total, 87 vintage vehicles retraced the route of the original Aston Hill Climb and joined an array of other vehicles in the showground at the top of the hill. Find out more about the day on page 26.

In other news, Stanley the penguin made a triumphant return home and now proudly stands guard on the London Road once more – read Stanley's story on page 20. You can also find details of a new walking route on page 15, and learn about the history of straw plaiting and sausage skin making in Aston Clinton on page 34.

There's a whole host of events throughout the villages this summer, including an opportunity for some green-thumbed inspiration at open gardens in both Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp (pages 21 & 22), a chance to dance the night away as Music Under the Stars turns 18 (page 31), and a jam-packed day of music, food and dancing at "Buckland Blast" to celebrate 25 years of Buckland Village Hall (page 32).

A big event to mark in your calendars is the Aston Clinton Family Festival on Saturday, June 14. From fairground rides, animal encounters and sports taster sessions to dance displays, vintage cars and a fun dog show, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Keep your eyes on the sky at around 2pm for the Lancaster Bomber flypast, and feast on a variety of food options on the day – more information on page 16.

While Juno may still be a little young to attend, I hope to see many of you there – with or without your four-legged friends – and I hope the sun shines, and it's a beautiful day. *Fiona Skeggs*

Aston Clinton Baptist Church



One of the comforts of the Christian faith is found in the shortest sentence in the Bible. It is found in the 11th chapter of John's gospel.

That sentence is, *Jesus wept*'.

He wept at the graveside of a dear friend.

He wept because he witnessed the distress of his friend's family in the face of loss.

He wept in anger at the destruction of life and love the death had brought.

He wept despite the fact that he knew he was going to bring his friend, Lazarus, back from the dead.

Most of all, Jesus wept because he cared.

He still cares.

One of the ways such care is expressed is by the work of the Food Bank that runs from ACBC, and I have asked Jo Drury to describe its work in a separate article in this edition of Village Life.

My prayer for any and all passing through troubled times, great or small, is that you will know the loving care of Christ.

Rev'd Nick Harris

Aston Clinton Ladies Group

Wednesday, June 18: Quiz Night in the Guide Hut, opposite the Shell Garage in Aston Clinton. Start time 8pm. All are welcome to join us.

July: No meeting due to many people away over the summer.

We are a friendly group of local ladies and always make a point of welcoming new members personally. If you're interested in joining us please contact *Sue Sanders 01296 630740* or *Janet Watson 01296 631014*.

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, June 1, 11am	Holy Communion at St Mary's Drayton Beauchamp
Sunday, July 13, 4.30pm	Hymns and Pimms 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 the St Mary's church. Please contact *Natalie Fieldhouse*.

OPENING TIMES

St Michael's and All Saints' are open daily 9am to 4pm 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
(closing for the summer on 18th July)

**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.

Aston Clinton Society

Looking towards the future!



Following feedback from residents, the Society is to take on a more active and vocal role in the community while continuing to deliver upon its founding objectives to improve the overall appearance of the village, preserve its charm, and ensure it remains a pleasant and welcoming place to live.

We have already gone some way towards tackling some of the bigger issues that affect the village by attending regular meetings with the parish council and working with them to apply pressure on Buckinghamshire Council to improve and maintain our roads and pavements. Although we are often frustrated by the slow pace of such work, our combined approach is paying off and several improvements have been made and others are now scheduled.

Of course, a much bigger challenge, which is likely to become the focus of the parish council and those living in Aston Clinton in coming years, is that of new housing developments in the village, particularly after the government revealed in December its revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework. If the Society is to have any say on planning applications in Aston Clinton, one thing is very clear – we need a much stronger membership to give us a collective voice in the community.

Village Life is funded with support from
Aston Clinton Parish Council

To help achieve this, we are launching a new member campaign, starting with a leaflet drop to all houses in the village and, as an incentive to join, we are dropping our £10 membership. However, there will still be an opportunity for members to donate at their discretion to help fund smaller projects around the village. We are also taking this opportunity to update our website so that it reflects the changes, recognises our achievements over the past three years, and reinforces the focus of our new objectives moving forward.

While this may appear to be a departure from where we started out, our original mission statement has stood the test of time and is more relevant today than ever.

“To tackle matters that affect the integrity of the village and village life in cooperation with other local, national and statutory organisations; retain its identity rather than being a cut-through to somewhere else and prevent it from becoming another soulless suburb of Aylesbury.”

Sally and Ann, our founders, remain committed to the Society but due to family and work commitments are unable to take on any more responsibility. Therefore, we are actively seeking someone with exceptional leadership qualities, vision and networking skills to take on the role of Chair and to be responsible for growing the Society. This would include helping to form an effective committee with smaller sub-committees for specific projects, like the village archives and fund-raising. If this is you, or you know someone who fits the bill, please get in touch with us at info@astonclintonsociety.org.uk

In other news, our quest to tackle the litter in the village is continuing with the installation of a new litter bin at the bus stop on Tring Hill (opposite the Crow's Nest), purchased from our funds. Also, a big thank you to the Beavers and Guides who have been out collecting rubbish around the village on their own litter picks.

Well done everyone!



Our next litter pick and tidy up is planned for **Sunday, June 15**, the day after the Aston Clinton Family Festival. As it's Father's Day, we hope it will encourage families to come out in force to tidy up the village for a couple of hours between 08.30am –10.30am.

Meet at the Red Kite Pavilion to sign-on and collect your litter pickers and rubbish bags.

Aston Clinton Baptist Church Food Bank update

In 2019, Aston Clinton Baptist Church set out on a new project – to set up and run a food bank for the residents of Aston Clinton. The aim was simple, to support local residents during periods of hardship with a grocery bag containing a mix of pantry items, toiletries and fresh food delivered to the door each week; tailored to the needs of the recipient.

Although run by the church, it has truly become a village-wide scheme, with regular donations of both food and financial gifts from local residents. Christmas brought some wonderful gifts from Aston Clinton School and local families, which meant we were able to provide not only our usual weekly bag, but seasonal treats for the whole family. We are grateful to Tesco, who also provide us with regular donations. A big thank you must also go to the Turpin Trust, which has given us a number of grants allowing us to purchase our regular shopping items to supplement those donated items.

But the shopping is only part of the story. Over the past five years, we have supported local residents with much more than their weekly shopping. We have written CVs, helped complete insurance claims, and supported residents applying for grants to the Turpin Trust for larger one-off items.

If you would like to get involved in the work of the Aston Clinton Food Bank in any way, then please do get in touch via the number below.

Donations of non-perishable items can be left on the porch of the Baptist Church. We are always looking for volunteers to support the collection and packing of items, so if you have an hour or two a fortnight to spare, then think of us. If you would like to benefit from the food bank scheme, please do call **07736 469715** or email foodbank@acbc.church.

Aston Clinton School Association

Since the last issue of Village Life, we've been very busy planning a range of exciting events for the year ahead and even into September 2026! We also successfully hosted PTAs from the local community on May 15, to share ideas on how we raise funds and how we could work together.

Clothes Recycling Bin

Our clothing recycling bin is back and even better as it gives us more money per kilogram than the last one. It accepts clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, curtains, shoes, and sleeping bags. Please do not include any soiled rags, carpet, rugs or rubbish. The bin is located on the left of the Key Stage 1 driveway off Twitchell Lane. Please try to donate during school hours, and if it is full, please don't leave bags there – it will be emptied the next working day, so please come back another time.

Summer Term Events

Frozen Fridays – every sunny Friday after school, we sell lollies for £1 and ice pops for 50p. Feel free to pop down outside the office (even if you don't have kids at school) to grab your refreshing ice lolly.



Break the Rules Day – we've heard this is some of the students' favourite day of the year! On May 16, a range of "school rules" were broken for a £1 donation to ACSA. Eat pudding first, wear nail varnish, wear your own clothes, have crazy hair, and have an unhealthy snack are just some of the rules allowed to be broken. It was a fitting end to a week of SATs for some of the children.

Steel – on Friday, June 27 we have planned for Gladiator Steel to visit the children at school. The kids are very excited, as are the teachers!

Colour Run – on July 4, we are planning our very first colour run. We hope the kids are ready to unleash their inner rainbow! It will be for the children, but adults are also very welcome to experience the thrill of running through clouds of colorful powder, enjoy the music, and get involved throwing the paint. Follow us for more updates:

Facebook: [@astonclintonschoolassociation](#)

Instagram: [aston_clinton_PTA](#)

Fundraising at St. Michael's

By the time you read this, we will be well on the way to completing a major part of the restoration works on the south aisle at St Michael's.



Newly elected churchwarden Steve Bowles (top), inspecting the west wall which was so badly damaged that it had to be demolished, and stonemason Nigel Jones (bottom) with the rebuilt wall.

At a cost of an eye-watering £291,000, we are pleased to say that we have started work which will, hopefully, be finished in the middle of June and we'll have a new waterproof roof!

Our thanks go to all those who have donated money to help us with this essential work, particularly the Turpin Charity which has pledged £100,000.

Sponsorship of tiles for the roof above the south porch has raised £1,800 over the past six weeks, and our thanks goes to all who have donated. But, the bad news is that up until March 31, 2025, it was possible to reclaim VAT on all the works; the government has now changed the rules, and we are now severely limited in the amount that we can reclaim.

Fundraising continues, and we hope to continue with the replastering of the chancel walls as soon as possible. The cement rendering fell off the east wall and investigation showed that it will be necessary to re-render all three walls at a further cost of £120,000. Once all this has been completed, we will be able to proceed to our ultimate goal of building an extension to contain a wheelchair-accessible toilet and a catering kitchen, so that we can start a much needed Dementia Café.

James Adam, Fundraising Coordinator

The Anthony Hall

The Anthony Hall, located in the heart of Aston Clinton, is home to many local organisations, family celebrations, children's parties and much more.

Aston Clinton Preschool takes place at the hall every weekday during the school year. Because of this, there is weekday availability during the school holidays, so the trustees have decided to have a special holiday offer for anyone wanting to hire the hall during the day.

Holiday Weekday Offer: £21 per hour between 9am and 3pm, Monday to Friday. There is a two hour minimum booking.

If you would like to take advantage of this offer (subject to availability), please go to www.hallbookingonline.com/anthonyhall or email theanthonyhallac@gmail.com.

Dunwalkin

Ben Robinson and Michael Portillo aren't the only ones to visit "Villages by the Sea" and embark on "Coastal Journeys". Marsworth resident Paul Barber did the same nearly two decades ago. In 2006/7, an eleven-month continuous circumnavigation of Britain's "outer coast" saw Paul, his partner and Havoc their dog clock up in excess of 5000 miles on their ultimate beating of the bounds. A bit further than The Salt Path (Raynor Winn).



The story now comes to life in the form of a book, "dunwalkin" (small d and no g!) - seventeen years in the writing. A bit "left field", part memoir, part travel guide, the book recalls their experience and acknowledges the support they received. Have you heard of Hash House Harriers? Curious? Buy the book!

It speaks of public generosity and being weighed down by donations. At the time, £50,000 was raised for Guide Dogs for the Blind and the RNLI.

Traversing some gorgeous scenery and the odd eyesore, enduring all weathers and hardships, domestic friction was not uncommon. The account is a warts an' all

record of the experience and self-analysis, over 400 pages, made scholarly by referencing others who trail blazed before writing their own accounts (John Merrill, Shally and Richard Hunt, and poignantly Spud Talbot-Ponsonby). The earworms that took root on monotonous sections, the "Tracks of My Years" give this account an added dimension. Beautifully and amusingly illustrated by two local artists, it also includes Havoc's Own Walkies Album of black and white photos.

Paul says "the fondest memory for me was the people we met along the way. We were truly touched by other people's lives. They were unable to commit personally to such a venture but their contribution was to assist us en route. All money raised from the sale of this book will be donated to Guide Dogs. I am not looking to make anything - just pleased I've told the story."

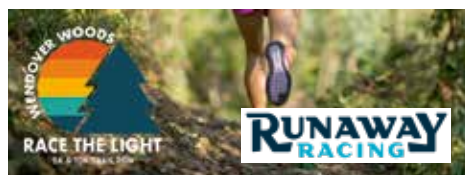
The initial first two print runs have sold out. Time to put the book on Amazon and raise more money for Guide Dogs.

Paul is Tring born and bred; having moved away to the southwest during his early adult years, he is now back and has been living in Marsworth for the past 10 years, working for a local farm. He is happy to deliver illustrated presentations and talks to local groups so please get in touch if interested.

To purchase/order
or to get in touch
with Paul please visit
www.dunwalkinbook.online
or Facebook:
[Dunwalkin - Paul Barber](#)



Your purchase will aid bonds between people and animals, allowing sensory-impaired individuals to lead independent, dignified lives. The book is also now available on Amazon, priced £15. Signings available if required.



Race the Light shines a spotlight on charity partnership

The Chilterns Neuro Centre was thrilled to be given a donation of £909 thanks to its partnership with Runaway Racing, a running events organiser based in Wendover.

Through the partnership, a donation was made to the charity for every person who entered the Chiltern Ridge Classic 50, the Chiltern Ridge Half Marathon and the North Chilterns 50, during 2024, with many of the runners also choosing to add a top-up donation.

Building on this success, the partnership is continuing in 2025 and is set to take a big step forward with the launch of a brand-new event – Race the Light. Taking place in the stunning surroundings of Wendover Woods on Friday, August 1, this special event offers something for everyone, from experienced runners to families and those looking for a more accessible challenge. Participants can choose from a 10 or 5k trail run or a 1k accessible route, all set against the stunning backdrop of the woods as the evening light fades.

“We’re so excited to be working with Runaway Racing on this amazing partnership,” said Danielle Medd, Fundraising Manager at the Chilterns Neuro Centre. “The funds raised so far are already making a real difference and

the launch of Race the Light will help us reach even more people. Whether you’re tackling the trails or enjoying the accessible route, every step you take will help support our work in the community.”

“With Runaway Racing HQ just a short walk from the Chilterns Neuro Centre, forming a partnership felt like a natural fit,” said Chris Bradley, Event Director at Runaway Racing. “We’re proud to support the incredible work they do for the community. As runners, it’s easy to take for granted our ability to explore our surroundings. The Centre’s physical treatments, which help improve mobility and wellbeing, are a vital resource for those in need of support.”

Entries for Race the Light are now open so, to sign up or to find out more, visit chilternsneurocentre.org/racethelight

Father’s Day Remembrance at Chilterns Crematorium Sunday, June 15, 10am – 1pm.

Our Mother’s and Father’s Day events are open invitations to everyone who may find these days difficult or wish to have a space to commemorate privately. We have bereavement volunteers on hand as well as memorial and bereavement literature available. Refreshments are provided and gentle music will be playing.

Donations will be gratefully received in the name of the charity “WAY” (Widowed & Young) however this event is free to attend, and you do not need to have been to the crematorium before to come along; it is open to all. (*Advert page 44*).



**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
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Wildlife Trust

News from your local nature reserves

We have had one of the best shows of spring flowers that I can remember, with violets and primroses being particularly striking, followed by carpets of cowslips, despite having hardly any rain for many weeks. It is remarkable, given the free draining conditions along the chalk slopes of the Chilterns, that our flora can be so resilient during what must be seen as a quite severe drought. There is still no sign of rain as I write this, so I am a bit concerned about the possible effect on our summer flowering plants and the insects that rely on them.

However, with the prolonged sunny periods continuing and some rainfall during May, I think we can expect some stunning shows of our chalk grassland flowers and associated insects. The unusually warm conditions so far this spring have led to early flowering of some of our Dancersend Reserve specialities, like the nationally rare Meadow Clary, and butterflies appear to be having a good start to the year with Dingy Skipper, Small Heath, Green Hairstreak and Common Blue all showing early.

It will be interesting to see how these conditions affect the eight different species of orchids at Aston Clinton Ragpits, always spectacular during June and July. Warden, Phil Townsend, will be carrying out the annual orchid count in mid-June – will he be breaking records? You could find out by joining him for a guided visit to this jewel of a nature reserve on June 22.

Our woodland areas at Dancersend may be facing another year of stress if the dry conditions continue. Work has continued over the winter with additional safety felling due to the extent of Ash Dieback disease. Some visitors have been concerned about this, but it has enabled us to keep almost all the reserve area open to the public. It has also opened up a lot of previously heavily shaded areas adjacent to the paths, so expect to see a great flush of flowers like Foxglove, Wood Spurge and Nettle-leaved Bellflower emerging from the buried seed bank. This welcome colourful transformation should benefit the great variety of insect life found at the reserve and this, in turn, will hopefully improve the fortunes of our woodland bird populations.

To learn more about the wonderful wildlife on your doorstep, please consider booking for one of our guided reserve visits. Our programme of FREE Introductory Visits and more specialised Guided Field Visits continues through the summer and more details and booking instructions will be found on the BBOWT website at www.bbwt.org.uk/events.

Otherwise, just come along to our nature reserves and explore on your own, but please keep any dogs on a lead and keep to the paths. There are plenty of other events for both children and family groups coming up at our flagship College Lake Reserve with details also to be found on the BBOWT website.

*Mick Jones MBE,
Volunteer Warden at Dancersend*

Photos: Common Spotted Orchids amongst Bird's Foot Trefoil, Nettle-leaved Bellflower, Fly Orchids at Dancersend, Common Blue butterflies mating, Foxgloves at Dancersend, Wood Spurge. *Mick Jones*

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

acvillagelife.co.uk



Getting close to nature

What a marvellous spring we had this year. After three overly wet seasons, we were treated to the perfect dry and sunny conditions. The daffodils and snowdrops, planted when wet, produced a long display from February to May. This was accompanied, in places, by intense patches of coltsfoot, celandines and beautiful blue ground ivy. The hedgerows showed signs of recovering with blossoms, again promising fruit for the birds this coming winter. The king cups on the big pond brought a mass of colour, some having survived the pond clearing, carried out late because of winter ground conditions. The mass of dead material in most of the pond provides perfect conditions for birds to nest safe from predators. Frogs and toads made the most of it and so did the heron that feasted on a glut of tadpoles.

Nature recovery is definitely happening at Estone Grange, and with so much bird song I really needed the Merlin (Bird Identification by Sounds) app. Once installed on my phone, it picked up birds I hadn't known were here. Repeatedly the same birds, and often more, are registered. It is not unfathomable e.g. I clearly heard a green woodpecker but it identified a greater spotted woodpecker. Even allowing for errors, it is proving a great way to follow birds wherever I am.

People help too; some residents have put up bird feeders. Among the chatter in the hedges it is great to see swarms of one of my favourite little birds, the long-tail tit, drawn to the feeders on Chapel Drive. Now the shrubs on Brandon Close are growing thicker and taller, birds have more shelter and flit securely between hedge and bush, and the new hedge along the wildflower meadow is becoming established, offering more accommodation for small mammals and birds.

No two years are ever the same. Sometimes it will be disappointing, but this spring has

been especially colourful and noisy. The wildflower meadows have yet to show their summer best. Last year was fantastic but it all depends on the weather and what went before. Meanwhile, I can't recommend the Merlin app enough. Enjoy the birds and flowers, the frogs, butterflies and all that nature produces. We literally can't live without nature so get close and personal and enjoy it too.

Katy Todd

St Michael's Church Silent Auction

From Tuesday, July 1 to Tuesday, July 8, St Michael's church will be holding a silent auction to raise funds.

Due to the maintenance works, the church will not be having its summer fayre this year, and we thought a silent auction might be a novel way of raising some money for the upkeep.

How can you help?

Donate an auction lot or place an auction bid through the silent auction, which will be held online. Please support us by donating a prize – so far, we have:

A limited edition bottle of whisky, a week's stay at a holiday home in Wales, a dinner party for six, an afternoon tea experience at Coffee 108, an original piece of art from a local artist, a voucher for The Oak, a day's fly fishing for two people, a massage voucher, and many more!

If you have any questions or you are able to donate an auction lot then please contact [Natalie](mailto:Benefice3@gmail.com) by emailing Benefice3@gmail.com or phoning 01296 632488.

Do you want to know a secret?

Sixty-two years ago, in 1963, The Beatles sang "Listen, do you want to know a secret?"

Now I've got a secret that I can share with you – a new walk from Dunsmore Lane, Wendover all along beside the Chiltern Line railway almost to The Black Horse at Great Missenden. It is completely traffic free (except where it crosses roads) and is ideal for walking and cycling especially with children on bikes or scooters. Not many people seem to know about it, so it's very quiet.

Dunsmore Lane joins the A413 Missenden Road to the right, just after the Jet petrol station. Drive over the railway bridge and park in the big entrance to the Christmas tree field. Walk back over the bridge to the start of the tarmac path.

The first stretch to Cobblershill Lane (Firecrest Fields) is open and somewhat uninteresting but after crossing the lane and over the railway again, it gets better and better. There are trees, beautiful views up into the hills and it's almost flat all the way. Further on there are even picnic tables.

Disregarding the notices on the gates that say "Footpath Closed", proceed to the final barriers before turning back. In all, it's 4 kilometres (2½ miles) from end to end and forms part of a projected cycleway called Misbourne Greenway which will, eventually, run the whole length of Bucks from Uxbridge in Middlesex to Brackley in Northamptonshire. This bit is part of a stretch from Wendover to Uxbridge.

Do try it – you'll love it!

James Adam



Aston Clinton Parish Council

It was with great sadness that we learned of the unexpected passing of one of our councillors, Howard Davies, at the end of March. Howard had been a parish councillor since January 2025 and had already immersed himself in council life, events, consultations and more. His level-headed approach to being a councillor endeared him to everyone, and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his partner, Janet, and to his family and friends.

The past couple of months have been busier than usual at the parish council, as councillors and staff geared up for the local Buckinghamshire Council elections on May 1, 2025. When the results were announced, Aston Clinton was an uncontested parish and now has 10 councillors elected for the next four years – eight existing councillors and two new ones. We welcome new councillors Tina Cardy and Jeremy Hodge to the parish council and look forward to working together on some great projects. We also thank our two retiring councillors, Kelly Hickson and Patricia Birchley, for all of their hard work and dedication in helping to make Aston Clinton a great place to live.

Reporting now on the public consultation held earlier this year to consider car parking charges for the park, the matter was fully and openly discussed at the March Council Meeting, and it was resolved not to introduce charges for parking in the park. This decision mirrored the majority of the 660 public responses to the consultation, and we thank residents for taking the time to participate in the process.

Our events team have been working hard putting together not only the Aston Hill Centenary event but also the 2025 Aston

Clinton Family Festival, which takes place on Saturday, June 14. Following a similar format to the previous three year's summer events, it will prove to be a fun and activity-filled day out in the park for all ages. All rides, except the bungee trampolines, are free until 4pm and then there will be a small charge. Music will again be provided by the wonderful Ellesborough Silver Band, who will play two sets this year. Our fun dog show will return, on the MUGA, – this year being run for us by Carly of Clips Dog Grooming – and there will be a wide range of food and drink available.

We're also thrilled to announce that a flypast is also planned, by a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Lancaster bomber, and at the time of going to press, this is scheduled for 2.05pm on Saturday, June 14. We will do our best to advise any changes to timings beforehand. There will also be various fitness and dance displays and a diverse range of stalls of local crafts and community groups. All timings can be found on the Family Festival poster placed around the village, on our noticeboards, website, and Facebook page.

Turning to all things green, Councillor Read has been planting new oak trees in the park, ably assisted by Mr. Chris Ronson, and our new native hedgerow is also doing well. Thanks to Amanda of the Chiltern Society for helping organise the new plantings.

Our Grow to Give initiative has started, albeit slowly as the growing season kicks off, and we look forward to once again supporting the Aylesbury Vineyard with our surplus fresh produce.

Finally, could we ask that when you visit the park, please park considerately, by respecting the marked disabled bays and keeping gates and hatched areas clear for access.

Aston Clinton Parish Council
www.astonclinton-pc.gov.uk

ASTON CLINTON FAMILY FESTIVAL 2025

FREE EVENT*

Aston Clinton Park

Saturday 14th June, 2025

12.00 -6.00pm



BBMF
Lancaster Flypast
approx. 2.05pm ***

Ellesborough Silver Band

1.15-2pm & 3-5pm

Zorbs & bouncy slide

Food & drink vans and
Your Cafe in the Park**

Chairplanes, teacup rides &
twister*

(*Rides free until 4pm)

Bungee trampolines -
charges apply
all day

Family fun in the park

Animal encounters
12-2pm

Stilt walker from 12.45pm

Punch & Judy shows
1.00 & 3.00pm

Balloon modelling 1.45 - 2.45

Tennis court fun

Bowls experience

Side stalls

COMPETITIONS & DISPLAYS

Aston Clinton School Poster competition
winners presentations - cafe patio 1.00pm

Dance displays on MUGA:

Zumba display 12-12.30 & 3.15-4.15pm

JoAnn Latus dance display 12.45-1.00

Salsa display 4.15pm

Classic cars &
Land Rovers

FUN DOG SHOW

1.30pm start on MUGA

Charity auction 2.20pm &
raffle at 5pm



** food available to purchase

*** Timings subject to change

MORE INFORMATION:
www.astonclinton-pc.gov.uk
or email:
assistantclerk@astonclinton.org
01296 631269

OUR CHARITY PARTNER:
KIRBY'S HERD (Cancer Research)
Voluntary donation
for all cars parked in the park



A message from Laura Kyrke-Smith MP

I am delighted to write for the summer edition of Village Life as your Member of Parliament for Aylesbury and the villages.



Image credit: Aylesbury & District News

I have continued to be out and about across the villages I represent over the past few months, meeting residents and attending engagements.

Recently, our communities came together to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day. On May 3, I was honoured to join His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, veterans, serving sea cadets and many others at the VE Day celebrations at the Discover Bucks Museum.

It was a very moving ceremony to remember those who we lost and those whose lives were changed forever by the Second World War. I spoke about how the values that they fought for – our freedom and our community – continue to shape Aylesbury today.

I met Margaret Wilkins, a remarkable veteran who served at Fort Southwick in

Portsmouth, tracking submarine movements in the Channel. I also enjoyed the celebrations, including wonderful music from Ellesborough Band, singing from Wendy Bartlett and the guess the number of poppies game!

Thank you to the organisers, including Aylesbury Town Council and the Aylesbury branch of the Royal British Legion.

On May 9, I attended a meeting at The Oak Pub in Aston Clinton with a number of community representatives. I appreciated the chance to discuss issues affecting the village, including housing developments. Thank you to Patrick the landlord for hosting.

In Parliament, I have continued to champion the interests of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp residents. Earlier this year, I was appointed by the Prime Minister to be a Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed MP. In this role, I am supporting our government to deliver on priorities close to my heart and to those of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp residents: clean rivers and lakes; ambitious nature recovery; and a roadmap to a zero-waste economy.

I am pleased our government is bringing forward action to tackle fly tipping. Last year, there were more than 4,000 incidents of fly-tipping in Buckinghamshire. I have been working with Thames Valley Police, who are increasing patrols in affected areas, but it is not enough.

Ministers have now launched a rapid review to slash red tape blocking councils from seizing and crushing the vehicles of waste criminals. Councils currently have to bear the significant cost of seizing and storing vehicles but under new plans, being considered by Ministers, fly-tippers will cover this cost, saving councils and taxpayers money.

Any criminals caught transporting and dealing with waste illegally will face up to five years in prison under new legislation. The government is making available £69 billion to council budgets across England – a 6.8% cash terms increase – and bringing forward the first multi-year funding settlement in a decade, to help fund key responsibilities like tackling fly-tipping.

Finally, I'm really proud of my Labour colleagues Helen Jones and Philip McGoldrick, who stood in Aston Clinton and Weston Turville ward in the recent Buckinghamshire Council election.

Their passion and commitment really shone through, and I'm grateful to everyone who supported them. Unfortunately, I won't get to work alongside them as Councillors, but I know they will continue to be dedicated champions for the ward.

We need change locally. From housing to SEND, from social care to potholes and pavements, Aston Clinton residents raise their frustrations with me regularly.

I remain committed to working with Councillors of all parties to serve residents and improve our town and villages for the better. As always, 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

Village Life advertising rates are to remain the same through 2025.

We are proud to support local businesses and will only raise rates when financially necessary.

Aston Clinton u3a

Members' main meetings take place at the Baptist Church on Green End Street on the third Tuesday each month, at 2.30pm, and are followed by sociable light refreshments. The next few months' presentations are:

May 20 – Dr Brenda Harold,
"GM and GE Foods"

June 17 – Christine Green,
"Working for Auntie as a Graphic Designer"

August 19 – Howard Slater,
"André Rieu – His Life and Music"

September 16 – John Caldicot,
"The Foundling Hospital – Daisy's Story"

We also have a day trip to Cambridge on

Wednesday, July 23, seats are still available.

Further contact details of all our groups and activities can be found on the Aston Clinton u3a website www.astonclinton.u3asite.uk/.

New members are always welcome.

Tring Choral Society's Summer Concert

Saturday, July 5, 7.30pm at St Peter & St Paul Church, Tring.

The choir will be singing a recent arrangement by Paul Drayton of Vaughan Williams' classic *"The Lark Ascending"*. We are delighted to have Paul Barritt (permanent guest leader of the Hallé Orchestra) joining us to play solo violin, the chorus taking the place of the orchestra.

Our second piece will be one of JS Bach's greatest compositions for solo violin played by Paul Barritt. The choir will also sing John Rutter's uplifting *"Magnificat"* for soprano soloist, full chorus, chamber orchestra, organ, harp and percussion.

Tickets available at tringchoral.org.uk or from choir members.

Stanley's Story

Life in the Antarctic could be a little boring. Stanley the Emperor penguin wished to see the world and dreamt of adventure. He was recruited by a world famous Champagne house to advertise their award winning wine, and so he travelled to London to take part in a celebration of winter – which suited him fine.

Unfortunately, revellers inadvertently seriously injured poor Stanley. So bad were his injuries he was not expected to survive, but help was at hand. He was rescued from near certain death by a young man who took him into the countryside to his parent's house. His mother, being in the medical profession and his father being a kind soul, nursed poor Stanley back to full health, and he lived contentedly in Aston Clinton for six years.

But all was not well. One dark December night, poor Stanley was kidnapped and stolen away confined to an enclosure. By great good fortune, however, a local lady who had heard

of his kidnap, recognised him in his enclosure and reported the sighting to the local police, who executed a swift rescue and treated Stanley to a ride in a police car back to his adoptive family.

Sadly though, Stanley had suffered further injuries – worse this time than previously. Poor Stanley was in dire straits. But in came the cavalry in the form of BBC Three Counties Radio, who, knowing of his plight, appealed to the public for a gifted plastic surgeon. Enter Charlie and Laura from Leighton Buzzard, who restored Stanley to full health.

What neither Stanley nor his adopted family realised was that he had become famous in the interim. He and his cousin, King penguin Ernest, now both stand proudly outside their home and acknowledge the many passers by, delighting the children and adults alike, and hope to remain so for the foreseeable future.

Many thanks to you all for the lovely messages sent on Stanley's return.

Julia Giles



Drayton Beauchamp Open Gardens

Sunday 22nd June 2025

1pm-5pm

Ticket £5

Under 16s Free
Cash only
please

All profits go
to Sunnyside
Trust charity

**9 beautiful
gardens to visit**

Visit beautiful and varied
gardens at the
**Drayton Beauchamp Open
Gardens Charity event.**

Parking will be signposted in
two village locations

Teas and homemade cakes
will be available at
The Dray House 2-5pm

**Horticultural Society Plant
Sale**

The Historic Church will be
open for visitors all day

Hope to see you there!

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

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 29)

Buckland and Aston Clinton Cricket Club

We had a tricky year in 2024, with poor weather impacting both Seniors and Juniors and the difficult decision to pull the Senior 2nd team out of the league. However, we are heading into 2025 in an optimistic mood. April has been bright and dry, the first two Colts training sessions have been held, and we had good availability for both Senior teams for the opening weekend fixtures and achieved a pair of comfortable victories.



With the 1st team in Division 1 of the Four Counties Cricket League and the 2nd XI in Division 5, there is a lot of cricket to be played this year. A further seven Sunday games are already confirmed, so there will be plenty of opportunities to give graduates of our Junior teams a chance to get used to taking part in open-age cricket. Of course, we have midweek league action for our Seniors as well as U11, U13 and U15 age group teams. We have a new Lead Activator for our ECB accredited All Star programme, with Jack Seaton and his team welcoming around 30 youngsters from 5 to 8 years old on Friday evenings to run around having fun and hopefully pick up some of the basics at the same time.

Spectators are always welcome at our matches, fixture lists have been posted on our play-cricket <https://baccc.play-cricket.com/home> and Facebook pages. More often than not, the bar will be open and our ground at the bottom of Church Lane is a beautiful spot to while away a few hours in the summer.

Phil Samuels

Buckland Open Gardens June 29, 1pm – 5pm.

We have nine gardens opening in the village this year. If you have never been before, it's a lovely afternoon visiting private gardens with a chance to have a cup of tea and a piece of cake in All Saints' church. There will be a plant stall run by the Horticultural Society at The Old Rectory as well. Come along and bring your friends. Pay at the first garden you visit.



Ticket £5 per person gives entry to all the gardens
Proceeds to All Saints' Church, Buckland

Tea and home-made cakes available at
All Saints' (2pm-4.30pm)

Plant stall at the Old Rectory
Enquiries - 07900 828621

Aston Clinton Bowls Club: Experience the joy of Bowls



Bowlers enjoying a roll-up in the sunshine.

Sitting in the park beside the horse chestnut trees and the tennis club, with far reaching views of Aston Hill, our bowling club lies in a beautiful spot in the village. We are always very welcoming to new members, young and old alike, whether you have played the game before or not. Bowls is very much an inclusive sport for all, and we have members in their 20s and in their 80s – and every other decade in between!

If you are thinking about taking up bowls, we offer a 6-week temporary membership, with no pressure or obligation, while you can decide if bowls is the sport for you. We can provide a variety of sizes of club bowls that can be borrowed for free, along with free coaching and full use of all of the club's facilities. We advise new players not to buy bowls until you find a size and weight of bowl that suits you best. Once a member, you will have access to the green most days in the afternoon and evenings to practise on your own, or with a coach, or with other members, both male and

female. Initially, you will only need to wear flat bottomed shoes or trainers, and reasonably smart casual clothing.

How far or how fast you want to learn bowls is entirely up to you, the most important thing is that you enjoy bowling. We hold roll-up evenings every Tuesday from 5.30pm. They are very informal, where members just turn up and play with other members, and they are ideal for newcomers to learn the techniques, rules and etiquette of the game. They are also a great way to meet other members, either when playing on the green or when enjoying a drink in the bar afterwards.

Our club relies on enthusiastic volunteer members to help maintain the green and its surroundings, and that helps create a great team spirit. Our green keeper is ably assisted by a number of members to help maintain the green throughout the year. We have done a lot of work over the closed season, and our green is in great condition for the 2025 season.

On Saturday, June 14, the Bowls Club will be supporting the Aston Clinton Family Festival, between 12 noon and 6pm. We will have a stand in the park beside our green, so please come along and chat to us. We will be happy to give you some very basic tuition and let you try bowls out, to see if you might like it.

Our front gate is usually open when we are holding roll-up evenings and also when we are playing matches against other clubs, so please feel free to pop in and have a look, or feel free to sit and watch.

If you would like to learn more about the bowling club, you can give me a call, and I will be happy to show you around.

Why don't you come along and experience the joy of bowls in Aston Clinton? You will be made very welcome.

*Robert Morrison, Club Chair,
07885 595447*

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.

Mike Stark, originator and chair of the organising committee for the Aston Hill Centenary celebration.



Aston Hill was one of the most important venues during the early years of motorsport.

“

Q. How long have you lived in Aston Clinton and what brought you here?

A. Jenny and I have lived in the village for nearly 30 years. We moved here because we had just started a family and needed a suitable home within a 20-mile radius of High Wycombe, where I was working at the time. Friends of ours in Aston Clinton sent us details of a house for sale, which we bought.

Q. When did you first develop an interest in motor racing?

A. In 1976, when I was 10 years old, my family went to the British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch, where I witnessed one of the most exciting and famous races of all time – motor racing enthusiasts will know what I'm talking about! I've been hooked ever since.

Q. Have you raced yourself?

A. Yes, I've competed in motorsport for the past 40 years. I raced powerboats when I was in my 20s and 30s, all over Europe. It was a very exciting sport, albeit with a lot of highs and lows. I was lucky enough to win some big races, including the UK Powerboat Grand Prix and the infamous 24 Hours of Rouen Powerboat Race, and I met a lot of great people, many of whom are still friends. But it was dangerous too, and I retired after a friend was killed in 1999.

Since then, I've competed in various forms of motorsport on dry land, including the rather strange sport of lawn mower racing! For the past 15 years, I've competed in cars, mostly in sprint and hillclimb events, and have even won a few championships. However, I turn 60 this year, so I very much doubt I'll win anymore!

Q. How did the Aston Hill Centenary celebration come about?

A. Three years ago, I mentioned to my friend Steve Akers that 2025 would mark 100 years since the last event at Aston Hill. I then said, naively, that maybe we should arrange an activity to celebrate this and even try to learn more about the history of the hill. Although, we knew that Lionel Martin named his make of car 'Aston Martin' after competing at Aston Hill in 1914, we didn't know much else. Little did we know that this conversation would lead to a large Centenary event as well as us writing a book!

Following a few informal chats with other local car enthusiasts, we approached Aston Clinton Parish Council, the Vintage Sports-Car Club, the Herts County Auto & Aero Club (which organised most of the events at Aston

Hill between 1904 and 1925) and vintage Aston Martin specialists Ecurie Bertelli Ltd. Not only were they all supportive of the idea, but they also offered to get involved and help make it happen.

Q. What discoveries did you make along the way?

A. The main discovery was that Aston Hill was one of the most important venues during the early years of motorsport. The drivers, riders and manufacturers who competed were drawn by the challenging nature of the course, and the Rothschild family provided generous hospitality to competitors, officials and guests after the events. Consequently, the hill climbs at Aston Hill received far more coverage in the motoring local and national press than most motorsport venues.

But most exciting for me was finding that an Alfa 24hp, the first model the company made, had competed at Aston Hill in 1912. Prior to this discovery, there was no record of any Alfa coming to the UK before WWI.

Q. You're also involved with the Aston Arrows project at the school, can you tell us about that?

A. Aston Arrows Racing is a project which gives a team of Year 6 children from Aston Clinton School the opportunity to build and race

a small electric car. The project involves the children learning many new skills as well as having a great experience – after all, how many 10 and 11-year-olds can say they've raced a car at Goodwood?

I'm one of the volunteers who help the children to design and build the car, although my main role is to teach them how to drive it on the racetrack. We are looking forward to racing at Curborough and Goodwood in June.

Q. Apart from motor racing, what other interests do you have?

A. I am a keen walker and also follow football. However, the honest answer is that my life is dominated by cars and motorsport, to the extent that I agree with Steve McQueen (who was a successful racing driver as well as actor) who famously said "Motor racing is life, anything that happens before or after is just waiting."

Q. What's your favourite car and what do you drive now?

A. My favourite make of car is Alfa Romeo. My current competition car is a highly modified Alfa Romeo 156 GTA, which is ridiculously fast and a bit of a beast to drive! I also have a classic Alfa Romeo Spider for use on the road. However, my daily vehicle is a Citroen van!

Q. What's your favourite music?

A. Anything from the 1970s and early 1980s, especially Stiff Little Fingers, The Jam and Wire.

Q. What's your favourite film?

A. The Other Guys with Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg – it's hilarious and pure genius.

Q. What do you think makes Aston Clinton a good place to live?

A. Lots of great walks and two excellent cafés!

Q. What, if any, changes would you like to see locally?

A. I'd love to see more permanent recognition of Aston Hill's history; there's nothing currently apart from the Aston Martin monument at the top of the hill. Along the promenade at Bexhill-on-Sea, where the first motor race was held in this country in 1902, there are information boards and pictures that explain and celebrate that local history. However, there's nothing similar in Aston Clinton that highlights what happened here between 1904 and 1925.

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](mailto:Editor.acvillagelife.co.uk)

*Interview **Barbara Muston***

Aston Hill Centenary Celebration

What a day! Three years in the planning, and meticulously organised, the Aston Hill Centenary Celebration turned out to be everything we'd expected – and more!



Photos: Cars gathering in the park. Steve Akers (centre), organiser of the exhibition with Mike Stark (R) and Ed McDonough (L). Aston Hill school exhibit. ACS Aston Arrows at the start. The 1902 Toledo Steam carriage finally arrives. Opposite: Cars going up Aston Hill. The showground.

It was a chilly, grey morning on Saturday, May 17, when 87 classic cars and motorcycles, assembled in Aston Park, but that didn't deter the crowds who came to admire and be amazed at this wonderful display of motoring history and engineering expertise, including some cars that had competed in the Aston Hill climbs back in the 1920s. Children from the Aston Arrows racing team at Aston Clinton School, all dressed as mechanics from the 1920s, gathered to wave the flags at the start line as, from 10am on the dot, the cars set off one by one on their journey through the village and then, via the Tring roundabout and the Upper Icknield Way, to Aston Hill itself. Enthusiastic spectators lined the way as the cars passed by with engines roaring and horns beeping out greetings. All but one of the cars successfully completed the climb over the route of the former race to the event site at Hill Farm. Unfortunately, the hill proved too much for the oldest car, the magnificent 1902 Toledo Steam Carriage, which had to have a helping recovery truck to get there.





Up at the main site, the vehicles arrived into the showground to lively applause from the waiting crowd. Row upon row of classic cars and motorcycles were arranged by age and model, with newer, flashier, supercars completing the line-up; from old to new, over a hundred years of car design and evolution were on full display. Just as the last of the cars made their way into the showground, the sun came out to make way for a glorious afternoon for everyone to share their passion for all things cars.

As a precursor to the main event, enthusiasts were able to visit the exhibition in the Red Kite Pavilion that provided a comprehensive history, including the origins of British motor racing – and the part played in it by the Aston Hill climb – as well as details of all the races over the years and the competitors involved. Illustrated by wonderful photographs obtained from the archives of the Herts County Auto and Aero Club (HCAAC), the Vintage Sports Car Club, the National Motor Museum archive and contemporary magazines, and digitally enhanced by Marion Mason, the exhibition gave a real flavour of the excitement of those

early 20th century races and the dangers of the sport. It also introduced us to characters such as Dorothy Levitt, the first British female racing driver, holder of the women's world land speed record and author, in 1909, of 'The Woman and the Car: a Chatty Little Handbook for all Women who Motor or Who Want to Motor'.

All the children in Aston Clinton School also contributed to the exhibition by making a detailed model of the very first Aston Hill climb in 1904, populated with model cars and spectators as well as drawings and written accounts of the races and competitors.

For anyone who missed the exhibition, it is expected to transfer to the Discover Bucks Museum in Aylesbury in the near future.

A huge well done to all the event organisers, stewards, volunteers, exhibitors and participants who went above and beyond to plan and deliver an event that will be remembered for years to come – and has restored Aston Hill to its rightful place in motor racing history!

Village Life Editorial Team

Local MP discusses village preservation plans

Laura Kyrke-Smith joined a group of dedicated Aston Clinton campaigners and village residents at The Oak pub on a sunny Friday afternoon in early May to hear concerns over plans for more local building developments.

Sandwich platters and afternoon tea were served as people gathered to learn more about plans for local housing development projects and the potential negative impact on already overstretched local services, traffic levels and roads.

Sean Hayward and Peter Hicks led a presentation and lively discussion centred around opposition to plans for more housing being submitted by developers including Laxton Properties, Bloor Homes and Burlington Homes at various sites around Aston Clinton. These three developments alone could see the addition of over 270 new houses in the village, against the backdrop of a more than 40% increase in new homes here over the past decade.

Others in attendance included the Chair of Governors at Aston Clinton Primary School, Aston Clinton Parish Council, Westongrove Surgery, and Directors of Wild Estone Grange Group and Estone Grange Management.

The presentation included information about the long history and heritage of the village, which was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and the current Aston Clinton Neighbourhood Plan, which was drawn up by the parish council, voted on and approved back in 2018. The current terms run until 2033.

A 'floodgate' development which could see nine new homes built on land off Chapel Drive was discussed, as well as the potential environmental impact this could have.

Additional developments flagged included an application for outline planning permission to build 65 homes at Weston Road, and a very sizable potential development of 190 houses in Lower Icknield Way, between Dean Way and Buckland Road.

A key concern raised was a lack of local infrastructure growth in Aston Clinton in recent years to coincide with the building of hundreds of dwellings. Also, the overall lack of affordability of new developments.

The Chair of Governors spoke about the possible impact of such building levels on Aston Clinton School, which currently has 411 pupils on roll and is already full for September 2025 intake. This means that any new families moving into the village would likely have children needing to attend school elsewhere.

Laura raised the Government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which they say is central to speeding up and streamlining the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure. She mentioned the idea of a 'nature restoration fund' that housing developers would pay into but acknowledged that local development plans need to look closely at environmental protections.

She also discussed a recent visit she had made to the Kingsbrook development in Aylesbury with Environment Minister Steve Reed MP.

Presentations took around an hour with time allowed for questions during and after the session and everyone was grateful to Laura for giving the assembled audience such a large amount of her time.

Discussions surrounding the hotly debated topic of further local building development are only likely to increase in Aston Clinton in the current climate.

AC Colts

As our season comes to a close, we reflect on what has been a fantastic year for the Aston Clinton Colts. We've welcomed even more children into the club, introduced them to the beautiful game, helped build lifelong friendships, and taught skills that go far beyond the pitch. A special moment this year is saying farewell to our U18s, many of whom started with us as U6s – their Colts journey may be ending, but their legacy remains.

Looking ahead, our Summer Tournament returns on June 28 and 29 – this is our biggest fundraiser and a brilliant weekend for families. Entry is free, so come along for a burger, slushie, sweets, inflatables, and great football! It'll be busy, but we've arranged third-party parking management to help minimise any disruption.



We're also proud to welcome our newest Gold Level sponsor, **KMS Motor Services** – a fantastic local business, and we're incredibly grateful for their support in helping us continue to grow and improve the club.

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



Finally, you can still support our very own Mark Waller, who on May 10 took on a 26-mile tab to raise awareness for Polymyalgia Rheumatica, Lymphoedema, and PTSD – causes close to his heart following 23 years with the Coldstream Guards. Mark and Di have been the heart of the Colts for over 17 years, and this challenge also supports our New Goals initiative. Donate at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/coltsgoals. *Every bit helps!*

The Colts Committee

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Buckland Parish Council

Buckland Parish Council held the first meeting of the new council on Monday, May 12. The new parish council, which came into effect on May 6, is made up of residents of Buckland Parish: Cllrs Jon Sainsbury, Carole Paternoster, Fiona Livingston, Heather McKenna, and Huseyin Caglayan.

Buckland Parish Council still has one vacancy for a councillor, so if you are interested in joining us, please get in touch with the clerk at clerk@buckland-pc.gov.uk. All councillors are volunteers and give up their time to help the local community, please bear this in mind when communicating with them. Also to note, going forward, the parish council has changed the meeting start time to 6.30pm.

We held the annual Parish Meeting on April 12 and were pleased to welcome members of the community. This meeting is called every year by the chair of the parish council and is an opportunity for local residents to find out what is happening within the parish. Any local group within the parish can report to the meeting, and this year we were pleased to welcome newly appointed Chair of Buckland Old School Trust, Richard Peel. Richard spoke of the revitalised trust and its plans for the village hall. The new team has introduced a new website and booking system, is actively promoting the village hall for hire, and is planning to hold a celebration to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of the hall in September.

Buckland Parish Council has employed two new teams of contractors to help with grass cutting. Each year, the parish council receives a precept from Buckinghamshire Council which is part of your council tax. The money is used to cover areas such as grass cutting, street lighting, maintenance of parish land, burial ground, dog and waste bin emptying, etc, with 25% of the precept being spent on grass cutting. Buckland

Parish Council has arranged for the verges in the parish to be cut once a month. The burial ground will be cut on a fortnightly basis through the summer months. As a gesture of goodwill, the parish council also cuts the grass in All Saints Churchyard; this will be done eight times over the summer.

Vehicles speeding through the parish continue to be an issue for everyone. At present, there are two main “hotspots” – on Tring Hill at the junction with Upper Icknield Way and the entry into the 30mph zone at Buckland Wharf. Despite repeated attempts to find a solution with Buckinghamshire Council, we have not had any success. At the end of May, we will be holding a meeting with our local MP, Laura Kyrke-Smith, to see if she can help find a solution. We will update you on this meeting in the next issue of Village Life. In addition to Tring Hill, Buckland residents have noticed an increase in traffic and vehicle speeds along Buckland Road. This seems to have worsened since the introduction of traffic calming measures in Aston Clinton and the road has become a rat-run. At the time of writing, the parish council has approached Buckinghamshire Council for advice on what can be done to slow traffic, but initial responses have resulted in little help. The parish council will continue to pursue this.

Once again, we are appealing for volunteers for our Speedwatch group. We are in danger of losing our Speedwatch equipment, as we have not been able to run sessions regularly due to a lack of volunteers. Please do get in touch with our clerk if you can help.

Clerk@buckland-pc.gov.uk
01296 630962.

Local stories
by local people

Music Under The Stars is 18!

Music under the Stars, the music event for charity held at Lower Farm, Buckland, will celebrate its 18th birthday on Saturday, June 28.



This year, the target charities will be Hector's House, which aims to prevent suicide and raise awareness about the reasons behind mental illnesses, the Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, and Animal Support Angels.

In addition, those attending will be asked to bring toiletries which will be distributed to the homeless and the Women's Refuge in Aylesbury.

As ever, a sincere 'thank you' to local businesses and those who attend the event for their enduring support. With their help, and that of the musicians who give their services for free, last year alone three local charities each received a donation of just over £700.

This year, the continued commitment and generosity of our sponsors has resulted in a truly spectacular silent auction – fit for an 18th anniversary celebration and promising something for everyone.

Awaiting lucky winners is a round of golf for four at Ivinghoe Golf Club; dinner for four

at the Half Moon, Wilstone, and for two at the Spice Gardens, Wendover; luxury hair products from Lee Moran; a £75 meal voucher from Hector's House; two tickets for a Vitality Blast cricket match at Lord's; and a generous supply of wine, donated by Dayla.

A special welcome to Mercedes Benz, Hemel Hempstead, for supporting us for the first time. We were overwhelmed by their extremely generous donation of exclusive clothing, including F1Team merchandise.

For more information contact:

Richard Peel

rp@hotmail.co.uk

078 0508 3595.

Village Life Distributor call out

Calling all our readers in Drayton Beauchamp!

Village Life is delivered to every home in the three villages by a wonderful team of volunteer distributors. After many years of deliveries, one of our faithful Drayton Beauchamp distributors has decided to retire, so we are looking for a new distributor to help by delivering to half the village. The commitment is to deliver the magazines every second month, normally over the last weekend in the odd numbered months. For example, the next one will be around July 25-27.

If you think you would like to help, or just want more information to help you decide, please contact our distribution organiser, *Richard Vincent on 07769 033794 or vldistribution@outlook.com.*

Thank you, *The Village Life Team*

Buckland Village Hall Celebration

A community get together – “Buckland Blast” – is planned at Buckland Village Hall to celebrate its 25th anniversary, and a photo competition has been launched, with winners to be announced at the event.

To be held on Saturday, September 13 from 10am to 9.30pm, the celebration will include the presentation of prizes for the best photograph of the village, the best essay written about the village and to the winners of our 20-question quiz about Buckland, which will be posted on the website in June.

“We want to bring the villagers of Buckland together, which happens too infrequently, to celebrate 25 years of the hall but also to raise its profile,” said Richard Peel, Chair of the Trust, which is organising the event.

The family fiesta will include an exhibition with photographs of activities and events through the years, a children’s entertainer, lunch for senior citizens, and an afternoon and evening of music and entertainment.



Soul Fools, a North London-based band with a seven-piece line up, will be headlining the evening. With lead singer Newton Brown at the forefront of the soul and funk band, you can expect sweet soul music, funk and upbeat instrumentals to get everyone dancing.

All ages are welcome to submit photos of their favourite view or scene in Buckland. The deadline for submissions is Friday, August 1, and they should be sent by email as a jpeg to Halandbookingsmanager@bucklandvillagehall.com. Please include your name, address and phone number.



Ross Holkham, of Ross Holkham Photography, (picture above), will judge the entries and has generously donated a free family photoshoot worth £350 as the first prize. The second prize is £100, donated by Olleco, and the third prize, £50, donated by the Buckland Old School Trust.

Supporters so far include Chiltern Archery, ARLA, Dayla, Olleco and Your Café in the Park, who will provide the food for the senior citizens’ lunch.

The event will be free for residents of Buckland and £10 for non-villagers.

Hall Hire

Hall hire is now £12 an hour for villagers on a weekday and £15 an hour at weekends. There is a new marquee and new signage funded through a Community Development Grant from Buckinghamshire Council’s Wendover and Villages Community Board.

Buckland Blast Schedule Saturday September 13

10am:	Coffee and exhibition
11.30am:	Children's entertainer
12.30pm:	Senior citizens' lunch
1.30pm:	Presentation of photo, essay and quiz prizes
2pm:	Dog Show
3pm:	Ceilidh
4pm:	Open mic
5.15pm:	Local Band
6.15pm:	Local Band

7.15pm:	Soul Fools
8pm:	Break
8.30pm:	Soul Fools
9.15pm:	Last Orders
9.30pm:	Close

There will be food vans on site all day, and a bar in the hall. Please leave your car at home!

*Richard Peel, rppr@hotmail.co.uk
07805 083595*

Discover Bucks Museum

*The Daleks are taking over
Discover Bucks Museum!*

Discover Bucks Museum in Aylesbury is excited to launch a major new exhibition Beyond the Stars: a propmaker's guide to the galaxy which showcases original models and props used in the making of the most iconic science fiction shows to appear on British TV, including Doctor Who, Red Dwarf and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Visitors can journey through the realms of time and space and get up-close to the props and models that helped bring these beloved series to life. All the exhibits on display are screen-used and some have never been on public display before.

Highlights of the exhibition Include:

- Imperial and Supreme Daleks from Doctor Who
- Marvin the Paranoid Android from the original 1981 BBC production of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
- Starbug model spacecraft used in series 3 of the cult classic Red Dwarf



Beyond the Stars – Starbug

Also featured are designs and behind-the-scenes materials that give an insight into the craftsmanship and imagination of the special effects artists who transport us to these alien worlds. With captivating exhibits and fun activities, there's something for everyone to enjoy from families to long-time fans of the shows.

The exhibition runs from May 24 to October 5, 2025. Test your sci-fi film and television knowledge in our quiz on June 14, and to keep up-to-date sign up to our e-newsletter. For more information about everything going on at the museum visit discoverbucksmuseum.org

Discover Bucks Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 2QP

Straw plaiting and the sausage skin factory

Our local villages have a colourful history, much of it bound up with people who have lived here for a number of generations. We recently spoke to Heather Davies, who told us about her local family connections that go back more than a century.

Heather's maiden name was Gillingham, and the Gillingham family ran a business in London but then moved, initially, to Dancersend. Emanuel Gillingham ran a fat and bone business and made sausage skins for the butchers' trade.

After they moved to Buckland, Emanuel, his wife, nine children, and extended family lived in a prefabricated bungalow, probably close to Whitethorns. Granny Gillingham had previously been a cook to the Rothschilds and on Sundays would regularly feed her family of up to 30 people.

The business later moved to a site near the Buckland canal bridge. Some older residents may remember the factory. At one time, the business was run by Lou Gillingham who lived at Prune Cottage in Lower Buckland. Several members of the family worked there, including Heather's father, Fred, his brother, Albie, and Albie's son, another Albie. Animal intestines were processed into skins and taken in barrels to Smithfield market in London.

There was also a sideline to the business, supplying raw materials for soap.

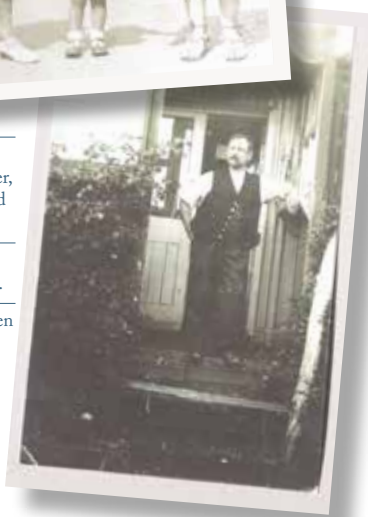
One of the major local crafts in the second half of the nineteenth century was straw plaiting and this employed many of the women and children in Buckland. Because of poor agricultural wages, it was often necessary for families to supplement their income with this cottage industry and children as young as five were often involved. The plaiters would buy bundles of straw and each straw would be split into thinner sections, which would be plaited into lengths. These were then sold to hat makers in places like Luton and Dunstable.



Heather's grandmother, Heather and her mother.

Emanuel Gillingham.

Charles Keen on his milk cart.





Nellie Keen outside her house in Model Row.

The wedding of Heather's parents in 1937.



Nellie Davis was born in Buckland in 1878, the daughter of a straw plaiter. Soon after this, though, the local straw plaiting industry started dying off as cheap imports from the Far East were undercutting it. Nellie married Charles Keen, at one time a milkman, and they moved to Model Row in Buckland, where she stayed for the rest of her life.

It was in Model Row that their daughter Doris was born in 1913, and when Doris married Fred Gillingham at All Saints in 1937, it brought the two Buckland families together. After they married, Fred and Doris moved to Weston Road, just along from the Rothschild Arms.

Bringing us up to date, their daughter, Heather, went to a local secondary school where she met Phil Davies and they were married in St Michael's, Aston Clinton in 1961. They have lived happily in Aston Clinton ever since, bringing up their sons, Kevin and Jeremy. The family has now expanded to include six grandchildren and four great grandchildren (with another due soon!).

Heather worked for 32 years at the Film Archive, first in Green End Street and later in Berkhamsted, where it became the National Film and Television Archive.

Richard Vincent

Buck Pub 2025 – Buckland's largest community event



We are delighted to confirm that Buck Pub will take place this year from **Friday, July 11 to Sunday, July 13** in Buckland Village Hall.

This is our annual village community event that's been running for almost 30 years. We provide a pop-up pub, food and entertainment for one weekend only. All details are on the website which will be updated regularly with the latest news: www.thebuckpub.co.uk.

Over the years this event has raised around £100,000 for a range of charities. This year we will be donating the surplus to local causes including All Saints Church and Youth Concern Aylesbury.

As with every year, for Buck to be a success we need a range of volunteers to serve behind the bar, provide food and help in the kitchen. We are also looking for local musical talent to contribute to the music festival on Sunday afternoon in the garden – almost any genre is welcome!

Do please get in touch if you would like to help. It's great fun and you'll get to meet a lot of your neighbours! We look forward to seeing you.

Nigel Kippax and the Buck Pub organising team

nigel@kippax.org.uk
07768 723043

Horticultural Society

First, a very big thank you to everyone who made our Spring Show such a great success, either by entering exhibits, by helping to run the event, or by coming along and enjoying the wonderful daffodils, spring flowers, creative crafts, and tasty refreshments.

The raffle proceeds of £245 were donated to Lindengate, next to the new Blue Diamond garden centre. Lindengate is a charity which supports people with mental health needs, those suffering with dementia and memory loss, and young people who have social and emotional challenges. Their garden is well worth a visit – see their website for opening times www.lindengate.org.uk.



Our not-to-be-missed Summer Show will be on Saturday, September 6, so put the date in your diaries now! Full details will be on our website soon.

So, what else have we got coming up for you now summer is here?

Wednesday, June 11: *“Getting to grips with fruit”* – our monthly talk at 7.30pm, Anthony Hall. Let Chris Day from Buckingham Nurseries inspire you to develop your fruit crop.

Saturday, June 14: *Plant Stall*, Aston Clinton Family Festival, Aston Clinton Park. Spotted some gaps in your borders or containers? Come along and find a bargain.

Sunday, June 22: *Plant Stall* as part of Drayton Beauchamp Open Gardens.

Sunday, June 29: *Plant Stall* at the Old Rectory, as part of Buckland Open Gardens.

Thursday, July 17: *Social Evening* at Buckland Hall 6pm – 9pm.



So, no excuse not to have a well-stocked garden and plenty of opportunities to have a chat and catch up with friends and meet other keen gardeners.

The most important thing during summer is to enjoy your garden and appreciate all the colours, scents and wildlife – what is nicer on a sunny day than sitting in the shade enjoying all your hard work and seeing the bees and butterflies making the most of it? But there are still jobs to be done.

Top jobs for this time of year include:

- Shade greenhouses to keep them cool and prevent scorch.
- Pinch out sideshoots on cordon tomatoes and feed regularly to ensure good cropping.
- Stake tall and floppy plants.
- Prune spring and early summer flowering shrubs once flowering has finished.
- Deadhead annuals and repeat-flowering perennials, to ensure continuous flowering.
- Feed roses after the first flush of flowers (especially repeat-flowering types).
- Sow biennial foxglove seeds and Sweet William for planting out in autumn.
- Continue with staggered sowing of lettuce for continuous cropping.
- Pick courgettes before they turn into marrows!
- Provide water for birds and pollinators, and keep ponds topped up.

Of course, watering is key to growing plants well and it is important to use water carefully to get maximum benefit.

Ideas to make the most of water in the garden include:

- If you have not already got a water butt, installing one is a great way to store water and help the environment.

- Water in the morning, if possible, as this is when the sun comes up and plants will start to use water.
- Direct the water round the base of plants where it is most needed. The foliage and soil surface is likely to stay drier for longer than in evenings, discouraging slugs, snails and mildew diseases.
- Watering thoroughly, but less often helps get the water down to the deeper roots. The soil need not be really wet all the time as roots need air as well as water to grow. Push your finger down into the compost or soil to see if it is damp, rather than just feeling the surface.
- Put saucers under containers to reduce the need for watering.
- Raise the cutting height of lawnmower blades during hot, dry spells when the grass is under stress to keep it green without watering. Established lawns will recover from dry periods.
- When choosing new plants, think about selecting ones most suited to your growing conditions and do some research. Add organic matter to the soil before planting and mulch afterwards to reduce moisture loss from the upper layers of soil.

Our annual coach trip this year on Thursday, July 3, is to Coton Manor, near Guilsborough, Northampton. See their website for more information – www.cotonmanor.co.uk.

We may still have some places available, so if you are interested email info@astonclintonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk. Cost is £25 for Society members and £28 for non-members. *Happy gardening!*

The Horticultural Committee



Momentum builds for Walk of Light at Waddesdon



The Walk of Light, organised by Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity, will take place on Friday, June 13 at Waddesdon Manor at 6.30pm. It is a fundraising walk where participants can either walk 5km or 10km around the manor's beautiful scenery. As the event draws near, there is growing momentum among supporters and participants.

As a sister event to the Charity's long-standing Midnight Walk, the Walk of Light offers a similar opportunity to come together in remembrance and celebration of loved ones while also raising funds to support compassionate hospice care for patients and their loved ones across Buckinghamshire.

The move to Waddesdon Manor has allowed the event to evolve, with this year's walk featuring new elements including a performance by local flute quintet Star Flutes in a reflection area in front of the Manor, as well as live music at the post-walk celebration.

"We know that funding is always difficult to achieve and we wanted to support a local charity like Florence," said Julia Creese of Star Flutes, explaining the group's motivation to get involved. "One of our members had a difficult time when their father died. They didn't want others to have to go through that experience without hospice support."

Among the many teams preparing for the walk are a group of Florence Nightingale Hospice nurses as well as other staff. "I'm taking part in the Walk of Light because without the Charity, the FNH@Home service would not exist," said Fiona Mitchell, FNH@Home Team Lead. "As a group, we decided to take part in this wonderful event because it's a chance to support the Charity in their continuing fundraising effort to keep the Hospice operational and increase our reach across Buckinghamshire and its borders."

With a new location, the return of the poignant remembrance lanterns, and enhanced post-walk entertainment, Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity is aiming to make this year's Walk of Light a great evening for all and a standout fundraising success for the Hospice.

To sign up, please visit www.fnhospice.org.uk/wol25

Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity would like to share a special thank you to its Walk of Light sponsors: ASM, Aston Commercial Cleaning and Xpress Labels.

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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.baccc.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

How Equity Release is Being Used.



Research from Equity Release lenders suggests more people are using the value within their property to meet their aspirational needs with 20% of new customers are now listing either holidays (11%) or cars (9%) as the primary reason for borrowing. These levels are the highest seen with holidays now the third most popular reason behind home improvements (24%) and paying off debts and mortgages (21%). It has long been forecast that low pension and saving levels coupled with longer life expectancy would result in some turning to their highest value asset to help them meet their essential and/or aspirational needs. Slowly but surely the desire to enjoy retirement is leading some to spend some of the equity they have gained in the last 30+ years on themselves.

Equity release products have come a long way since the 1990's when they had a justifiable reputation of being stacked in the lenders favour. They are very different today. If required, they can now allow full or partial, regular or ad hoc payments to be made to service the interest, they include no negative equity guarantee and offer inheritance protection for beneficiaries. They also can be tailored to provide a lump sum only or a lower initial lump sum with an agreed reserve amount available to 'Drawdown' for future use should an applicant prefer to access more tax-free cash at later points of their life.

Paying off debts/mortgages has remained the most common reason for those taking lump sums in isolation with 26% of applicants doing this. Home improvements remains the second most popular reason, with 11% gifting equity to family members so they can meet their aspirational needs making it the third placed reason followed by the car buyers. Just providing a contingency fund is fifth at 8%.

Drawdown customers favour even more aspirational and lifestyle-oriented uses, with only 16% of applicants primarily using released funds for repaying debts and mortgages – 10% less than lump sum customers and only marginally above the 14% taking out a lifetime mortgage primarily for holidays. My experience is that drawdown customers tend keep a higher percentage in reserve to meet their future, potential, aspirational needs but this can't be measured until they actually take it!

Research suggests homeowners across England have accumulated over £2.547trn worth of equity within their homes with 8.8m people owning their home mortgage free. This equates to about £288,000 of equity per property. At a local level, Buckinghamshire is home to the most valuable property market when it comes to total housing equity. The average home had a value of £447,579 during 2023 and that gives the housing equity estimate £40.6bn across 90,175 mortgage free homes. However, millions more people in England will be approaching or entering retirement with either mortgage or other debt and this might severely affect their ability to live as they would want or even retire at all. So, for some, Equity Release will be an option worthy of consideration. Professional advice is always a necessity to ensure you have considered all the options and help fully understand the illustration you must obtain.

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PF Financial	42

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D Hewitt Building Services	51
Jim Workman	59
Laxton Properties	57
M D Marriott Decorators	59
Mercer's Painting	59
N R Green	60
P Greville	49
R C Bricklaying	61
Smashing Windows	46
The 50 Plus	45

CARE & CARE HOMES

Chilterns Neuro Centre	49
------------------------	----

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Roy Chapman	55
TJK Driver Training	47
Tyre Changers	52

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Barnowls Nursery etc	51
PACE Charity	62

COMPUTER SERVICES

Problems with my PC	61
Wendover Computers	50

ELECTRICAL

E Sharp (Electrical) Ltd	46
MJ Electrical	60
Warren Electrical	44

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H A Phipps Fencing	54
Lewis Developments	50
Merryweather Mowers	59
Passiflora	52
R B Treecare	48
R D Leonard	59

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A Brighter Home Ovens	47
Albany Carpets	52
DF Clean	60
Elizabeth Anne Blinds	45
Johnson Sewing Machines	59
Stitch & Mend	59
Warren Ovens & Carpets	58

HEALTH & FITNESS

Clear Aid	58
Jazzercise	54
Pure Pilates	53
Physio Pilates in Bucks	50
Progressive Sports Massage	48
Sports Rehab	61
TaiChi Health Qigong	2
Tot Bop	56
Yoga with Sam Lees	56

HOTELS/RESTAURANTS/PUBS

The Oak	64
---------	----

LEISURE & TRAVEL

Aston Bridge Club	44
Aston Wine Club	54
Fisheye Film Festival	43
Travel Impressions	58
Wendover Arts Festival	43

PLUMBING & HEATING

A C Plumbing & Heating	56
Bucks Boilers	63

RETAIL

Alura Candles	46
Puddingstone Distillery	57
Tring Brewery	45

SPECIALIST SERVICES

F R Jeffery Coal	49
J Brown Funerals	62
Purely Dogs	59
Sophy Winfield Counselling	48
Tring Market Auctions	49



Defibrillator locations

Unless otherwise stated, these defibrillators are available 24/7. The postcode is required by emergency services.

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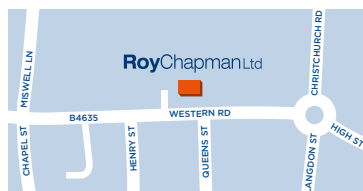
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