

Aston's Santa and Festive Dress Greetings

Wearing Santa and festive dress, families, friends and folk from Aston and Cote took the opportunity to give warm season's greeting to all they encountered on Sunday 20th December (between 10 and 11am) whilst walking, running, cycling, scooting or push chairing around our villages. Well done to Kate Norton for suggesting and organising the occasion and to all those who took part. Pictured are just some of the participants with more inside this edition.

Richard Haines



Voices Donation Appeal Thank You

Many thanks from the whole of the Voices' editorial team for your very generous contributions to the Voices Donation Appeal which has raised £663 towards Voices printing publication costs. This will enable us to continue to produce full colour editions and to cover the increasing costs with the growing number of homes in the Parish.

Also, thanks to our printers OxUniPrint Ltd for their help and support and to the Parish Council for their grant.

As always your support is much appreciated and remember you can still make a donation at the Aston Community Shop in The Square, by card or cash through their till using the 'Voices' button. Or you can simply make a secure donation right now by bank transfer to Aston Newsletter, Sort code 09-01-51, Account No. 44115506.

Richard Haines – Treasurer



You can make a donation by card or cash at the Aston Community Shop

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Editorial

In this edition we feature some of the ways we coped with the virus. As 2021 unfolds we should be able to enjoy some of the things we missed in 2020. A date has been fixed for the produce show, Sunday 12th September and hopefully village organizations will soon be able to reconvene.

We would like to thank all those kind people who deliver the Voices, it is much appreciated. We are still looking for someone to do a recipe slot for us and we would really like to have an in-house crossword compiler- Caroline sets the cryptic crosswords, but we don't have anyone to do the "easy" ones.

The North Farm development is still a hot potato. Parish Council want to hear your ideas and views and Russell has written a piece explaining how we can respond.

Editors

Richard Haines and Andrew Long



Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
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Chimney Meadows Update

Chimney Meadows forms part of The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) which is the only voluntary organisation in the region that protects local wildlife. We look after over 80 nature reserves, speak up for wildlife and inspire people to love and protect nature.

A local major piece of work is the Chimney Meadows Wetland Restoration Project, information about which is on our website www.bbowl.org.uk We have submitted two planning applications that will be available for people to view and comment on in the new year.

*Lisa Lane - Upper Thames Living
Landscape Manager
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust*

Dear Editors,

It has been brought to my attention that North Farm in North Street is going to be a housing site. I think we have enough houses in Aston. It is about time we had a few more shops for the elderly to shop in. Perhaps North Farm could be turned into a farm shop as there are a lot of gardeners around here.

Bampton has enough houses being built. All builders want to do is build houses and nothing else.

Thank you.

Mike Lelliott

Dear Editors,

Village Shop & Voices

Thank you so much for the vision of the Steering Group, the time spent setting up Aston Community Shop so beautifully, and for the helpful volunteers who staff it. Such a brilliant and friendly hub for the village and, in these difficult days, it is a vital asset. Having the Post Office located there is an additional bonus.

A second thank you for the "Voices" magazine which keeps the whole village up to date with all things going on in and around Aston, when going out and meeting friends has been more difficult. We are so fortunate!

From a grateful Resident.

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You can also find

Voices
on-line

On the home page
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More of the photos from Aston's Santa and Festive Dress Greetings - continued from front page





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Parish Council News

On behalf of the Parish Council, I should start by wishing all residents a very Happy New Year – it just has to be better than 2020, surely? It was heartening to see community spirit in our Parish at its best throughout the past year, with volunteers stepping forward in large numbers to assist those more at risk with shopping, collection of prescriptions and the like. Our thanks to them all for their ongoing efforts (we're not out of the Covid woods just yet), and to our Parish Clerk Elaine Anstee for coordinating the overall effort.

Whilst 2020 will certainly be a memorable year, mostly for all the wrong reasons, life has continued nonetheless – Parish Council business included, albeit now conducted 'virtually' via the internet. Financially we are in good shape, as confirmed by a successful external audit in November, and we are now finalising our budget for 2021/22. Speaking of which, I am delighted to confirm that for the third consecutive year, there will be no increase to the Precept – testament to the financial prudence we continue to exercise.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen some real progress in a number of projects. Traffic calming is well underway with automation of the school 20 mph signs, as well as new village signage now installed (very ably assisted by OCC). Further measures are being considered (including in Cote, Chimney and Shifford) as more 'Section 106' money becomes available from the two developments on Cote Road – as ever, suggestions and comments from residents would be most welcome. The new bus shelter opposite Foxwood was a welcome arrival in the Spring. After a short delay due to unforeseen power supply problems, we expect to have the defibrillator installed in the Cote telephone box very early in the New Year. We hope to see further clarity early in 2021 on two development projects involving OCC property in the Parish. Firstly, the business case for the proposed children's home in Back Lane is currently undergoing a review, with the results expected sometime in January. Secondly, initial discussions took place with OCC in December concerning the future of their vacant North Farm site as a community-led development opportunity, with a further meeting planned in January. Meanwhile initial public consultation remains open, with comments welcome via email to astonpc@live.co.uk or by post to the Clerk. We intend conducting a further round of consultation on North Farm as soon as OCC further clarify their intent.

Finally, there can be no better evidence of life continuing apace in the Parish, with the arrival of the first residents of the two Cote Road developments. A very warm welcome to you and all the new arrivals in our community over the past year.

*Russell La Forte,
Chairman Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council*

Aston and Cote P.C.



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Delivering Voices

We are increasing our print run to include the new houses in Marsh Furlong and The Hawthorns. We now need people to deliver Voices to these new developments. If you have just recently moved to the village and want to be involved in the community why not become a Voices deliverer? If you can help with delivery contact Susan Haines 850855 or emailsusanrhaines@hotmail.com

Postie Richard's Memorial Bench

In August, our beloved postie, Richard Godwin passed away. His loss has been felt by so many in our community - the friendliness he showed to the families (and four-legged friends) on his rounds had a profound impact and this kindness is what we wish to honour, remember and continue.

The idea of a memorial bench has been keenly supported by lots of people in the village and after several months of checking possible options for where to place the bench, the Parish Council has kindly helped to sort a suitable site and have offered to pay for the installation. It will be placed along the short wall shown in the photograph opposite the entrance to Waites Close, looking down Bull Street. This was one of Richard's routes and can provide the perfect resting place for those walking to the new community shop or bus stop.



The site for Richard's memorial bench

A 5ft (three seater) bench with a plaque or engraving will cost around £400-£450. Any monies raised that exceed this amount will be given to The Oxford Heart Centre in accordance with Richard's daughter's wishes. Should insufficient funds be raised to purchase the bench, all monies in this account will be given to The Oxford Heart Centre.

The wording for the plaque/ inscription will be agreed with Richard's family. If you would like to make a donation to the memorial project, our preferred option would be for you to do so at the village shop. However if you would find it easier, you can also donate online at our Go Fund Me page: <http://gf.me/u/zdf392>. The target date for raising funds for this project is 31st January 2021.

With thanks

Netty Lings and Casey Godwin

Census 2021

Households across Oxfordshire will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The Census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, apart from 1941. This year, for the first time, the Census will be digital. All households will receive a letter in early March with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on 21 March on their computers, phones, or tablets.

For some of our residents, this will make things easier, but we understand that for others it could be challenging. Please contact the Parish Clerk by post at Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council, 16 Foxwood, Aston OX18 2DZ if you would prefer a paper form to complete and these requests will be passed onto the WODC Census team.

There is more information at *About the census - Census 2021*.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council,

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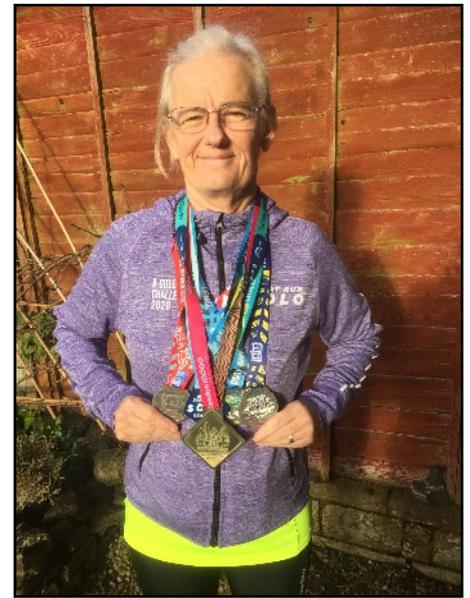
Aston and Cote P.C.
WODC Hilary Fenton

Virtual Challenges

As a member of Woodstock Harriers and the Aston and Cote Running Group I would normally take part in organised road and cross country races. However, since the beginning of the first Lockdown all training and races were cancelled, so I took on virtual challenges mostly with the Ultra Challenge Series. This means simulating the distance locally within a set time period.

In May I started with a 100k walk, jog, run. In June, July and August I completed 100k to 200k in the respective months. Then in November I completed the 280k (174 miles) Offa's Dyke Path challenge, the majority of which I ran. I also completed the Great South Solo and Vitality London Virtual 10k with a friend, Rob. To finish the year, in December I ran the 100k Virtual North Pole challenge.

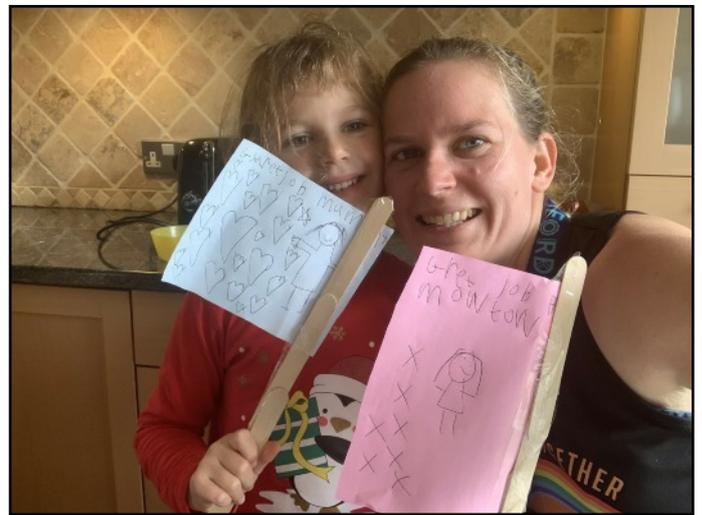
Seven virtual challenges in all, I would recommend it, even if just for the bling!
Susan Haines.



Susan Haines

This year was not how anyone expected and after running the Oxford Half Marathon in 2019 I decided in 2020 I was going to aim for two half marathons, the Southampton Half scheduled for April and the Oxford Half in October. When the Southampton Half got cancelled in April I decided to run it anyways but around Aston. Going from Aston up to Chimney Meadows, then back, along Buckland road to The Trout and back to Shifford Chapel, around Cote, a bit more back and forth and then done! With the kids and hubby cheering me on I managed to do it. The next postponement date for the Southampton half was June, then August and I decided to continue to do half marathons on all the postponement dates - August involved an early start of 6:30 am to avoid the heat! Then in October I did the Oxford Half this too run virtually managing to achieve a personal best. So instead of my aim of two half marathons, I have done five. This year hasn't been all bad.

Kate Norton



Kate Norton

COVID-19 has forced many of us to carry out our 'daily exercise' differently from our usual routine, from YouTube exercises with Joe Wicks to online cycling with Zwift.

For me, running is my daily exercise. Before COVID-19 I'd only been running for about 18 months, and I was running 2-3 times a week. I had completed a few organised 10km events, had attended the Witney Park Run a dozen times, and run in the Oxford Half Marathon. Just as I was looking at which challenges I could do in 2020, COVID-19 came along. I therefore started to look at what virtual running events I could participate in to keep me motivated to continue to run, improve my fitness, burn some calories, and give me some 'me time'.

My motivation to run now comes in the form of a few virtual running challenges that I have set myself. Being part of virtual communities in these challenges helps to motivate others. I am currently logging my runs on the 'Witney (not) ParkRun' website. In December with a challenge called 'Marcothon' I ran at least 5km every day.

In January I am running every day for 30 minutes with a challenge called 'RED January' (this is for mental health awareness). Lastly my biggest virtual challenge is to run from Land's End to John O' Groats over the course of a year (I've just reached Kendal, which is halfway of the total distance of 874 miles).

If you see me running, say 'Hi'.

Andy Clark



Andy Clark

Other Stories Around the Village

As the year drew to a close heavy rain caused the playing fields, play area and fields surrounding Aston to flood. Although not on the epic scale of 2007 but it could get worse. We normally expect closures on the Great Brook road due to water problems but in late November Bampton Rd by the Pottery was closed to traffic for a week whilst Thames Water undertook work. The Pottery itself was not able to reopen after Christmas due to Covid Tier 4 restrictions.



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ADVANCED WARNING - ROAD CLOSED

Not a problem I supposed.

Getting to Bam. should be quick,
But which of the roads should I pick?

Let me see...let's have a look,
Down Bull Street and round the
Brook?

Up Lew Lane and over Mount Owen,
Yes, that's the way I am goin'!

First bit was easy, down The Mile,
Turning left, became single file.
Massive cars the common factor
Yes you've guessed the Chelsea
tractor.

Giving way was what was needed,
Not all drivers had conceded.

'twas not easy trying to pass,
Spent more time parked on the grass
Or going backwards towards a gate,
Losing patience and becoming irate,
Eventually arrive at the turn to Lew,
Miles to Bampton, only two?

The road was winding, began to
meander,
No time to gaze or to gander.
Lots of traffic, another jam,
Then up Mount Owen and down to
Bam.

Into the doctors' and wait my turn,
Sitting there I start to learn,
The best way home is round the
Brook
And that's the way I jolly well took.

(Much, much quicker!)

Andrew Long



Gardening Notes

As I write this my garden is completely waterlogged and will be I think for a while. Do not be tempted to plant any bare root trees or roses – not shrubs. If you dig a hole it will fast fill with water – no good for roots. Instead pot them up in old compost, just to keep the roots moist. Plant when conditions are more favourable.



My favourite winter shrub is Garrya

It is nice to get into the garden on a sunny day, but any worktime should be short, for your comfort. Instead enjoy indoors and warmth. If you have lifted dahlias, make sure they are in a frost free, but not heated, shed. Brush off any spare soil so as they dry and stand them on their old cut down stems to allow moisture to run out. As soon as Spring is here they can be set in trays of compost (not deeply) to sprout and planted out in May.

At this time of year I love to bring a few springs of winter flowering shrubs indoors where they will scent a whole room. Because pollinators are so few this time of year, these plants rely on their scent for yards around the shrubs to attract whatever is about.

Amongst the best are Sarcococa (white box) Lonicera Perpusii (Honeysuckle) Viburnum Bodnatense (heavily scented), Jasmine Nudiflorium (lovely yellow). My favourite winter shrub is Garrya Elliptica with its elegant grey tassels, held right until the end of January (no sent though). All these are winter treasures.

Hellebores are just starting to flower, and to enjoy the flowers more, very carefully snip away the old tatty leaves, new leaves will soon emerge. This should allow a good show for early Spring. To help them along I like to scatter a handful of poultry pellets or general fertilizer around the clump for they are just about to give of their showy best.

Bullfinch

AJS

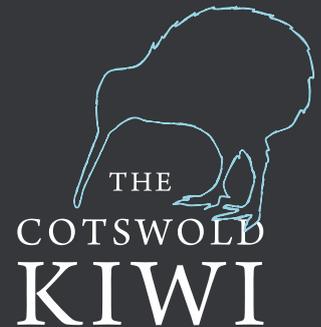
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1st Aston Brownies.

The unit has now finished the Autumn 2020 term and we have welcomed four new brownies to the unit during the term which is great. We have also done their Brownie Promise via Zoom, and just as soon as we can all be together face to face, we will have a Brownie Badge Awards Evening with parents invited and drinks and nibbles too, so quite a celebration evening.



The unit used the Zoom platform for the whole of this term which proved a great success. We worked through the various Skills Builders, for the badges,

this proved quite challenging to do "virtually" but we managed. I must say a big thankyou to the Brownies that attended, and to the parents that encouraged their daughters to come online and where there to oversee each meeting.



The unit is always in a position to welcome enquiries for new girls to join, for more details please get in touch with me Karen on 07887974468 or karenthegardener123@gmail.com.

The unit is currently looking for a toadstool for the traditional enrolment ceremony, it could possibly be made from wood locally. Any suggestions as to where we might be able to get one from, then please get in touch with me (see contact details above).



We have been asked if a few Brownies would like to do a small piece about Lockdown from a child's point of view, please see their pieces included in this edition.

Stay Safe

Karen Stay. Brownie Leader.



Kids and the Corona Virus

The items below give us some idea how the pandemic has affected children.

Isla Poulson - Age 9

The Covid 19 virus has affected most people in the world, it has affected the NHS, millions of key workers, it has also affected school pupils and just normal people living their every daily lives. Living in this crucial time of this pandemic I have been a school student from being in year four up to now being in year five.

It has been very hard especially in the first lock down, not being able to see my friends and not being allowed to go to school. In the first lock down kids from all around the county were not allowed to go to school so had to work from home. When I was doing my school work at home I still got to see my friends as I could still call them and face time them. It was very strange doing school work at home as I had never had to do something quite like it before. The main reason for me why it was weird was because at school if I did not quite get something I could ask my friend or the teacher but instead I was asking my family members.

Stay safe,

Beth Walker - Age 9

The good side of Covid is that a lot more people are exercising more, which is good for your health and you are seeing a lot more of the family that you live with.

The bad side of Coronavirus is that people are losing their loved ones because of the disease and people cannot see their family and friends. Sometimes I feel a bit bored because of Coronavirus. I can't do my badminton club or see my friends for playdates.

Brownies has been really different because it has been on zoom, but I have had more time to work on my badges and I have done mindfulness, archaeology, grow your own, jobs and baking.

Evie Walker - Age 11

Written in the first lockdown April 2020.

Corona virus

Lockdown is in full swing,
Corona-virus is a scary thing,
Everyone is extremely bored,
But praying for the ill to be cured.

Half the country is in furlough,
And the deaths just don't seem to slow,
There are some positives to Covid too,
Like I'm out with my family whilst the sky is blue.

We go out for bike rides whilst the sun has no end,
And everyone misses their family and friends,
Which is why we send love over facetime,
Are these forgotten words in my lifetime?

School is scarce,
Handwashing is an extreme care,
Being locked in a cage isn't fun,
But everything will be alright when we're done.

Everyone has had some time to reflect,
And had time with their family to really connect,
But there is one thing I want all to understand,
The most important thing I know about storms is,
They don't withstand.

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Looking Back at 2020

The year turned out to be strange and cruel. Never confronted before with a pandemic, how did we cope? Living under Tier 4 in Aston, key workers went out and got on with their jobs. Questioning local people was to show the understated commitment, as Covid-19 could infect anyone at any time.

Andy Ball, Aston Repair Depot said, "If we could fill a book of all strange occurrences – no one would believe us. I stayed open, not for the financial side but to help.

A lady working from home discovered a flat tyre on her car. On the face of it not serious BUT she needed to fetch emergency supplies for her housebound parents in another village.

We turned the 'pop' music channel up loud in the workshop to block out the radio news channel. Approached by a neighbour I started to apologize and he said "No turn it up more, it's cheering me up!"

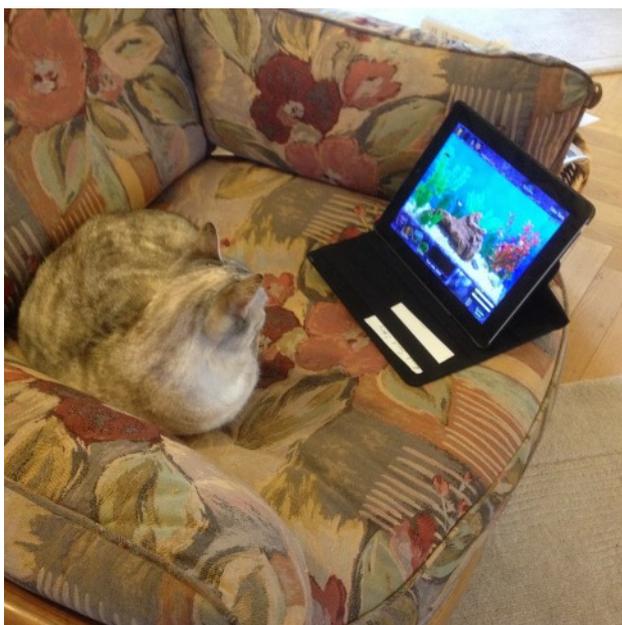
Caron Glen, a School Teaching Assistant said "The hardest thing for me was that as a keyworker in the school, I could cuddle other people's children but not my own grandchildren." Her husband Jack turned out early everyday to drive supplies. Driving made easier with empty roads but no service stations for food and toilets. He was particularly proud to have been selected to take equipment for the Nightingale Hospital being built at the Excel Centre in London.

Speaking to Russell La Forte, Chairman of the Parish Council, he said, "Covid-19 affected our meetings and we had to re-invent the wheel in as much we discovered zoom meetings. We put leaflets through villagers' doors to offer help/support and Elaine Anstee coordinated the supplies. And the best thing was the good we sensed: a huge feeling of community spirit. Clapping for the NHS to acts of kindness.

Zoom became a password. Pets got lucky, and a beneficiary in my home is our cat "Mia". We are in permanent residence – huge help with doors and windows and no yearly cattery stays!

As we are in 2021 we can be thankful for the Oxford scientists (just down the road) which have manufactured a vaccine which soon gives us hope and maybe a future hug.

Lizzie Wood



Mia chilling out

FACS

Friends of Aston and Cote School

What a fantastic term of fundraising we have had - thank you so much to all the families, the school and the local community for the support, we couldn't have done it without you. We have raised an ASTONishing amount this term - £2701.46 so a big THANK YOU.

We were raising money for 15 new ipads for the school which have now been bought and the school will be receiving them soon and our next project is to raise money for a new playground markings for the children to enjoy.

Next term we will be having another collection from Rags2Riches4Schools so if you have anymore unwanted good quality, re-useable (clean, dry and wearable) clothes and accessories that you are looking to get rid of, please leave them on the morning of the 2nd March at the school gate in bin bags and the company will come and collect them. With the November collection we raised £242.84 so this is a great, easy way for us to raise funds for the school.

Our plans for the Spring Term are still in planning so to keep up to date with FACS news please do follow us on Facebook at "Friends of Aston and Cote School" - we hope to have another great term of fundraising in order that we can get these playground markings for the summer term.

Any questions for the team do feel free to contact us at facstaston@gmail.com

Kate Norton



Exercising Safely in the Parish

Seeing a cyclist suddenly appear in the twilight is scary. A foot on the breaks and a near miss is not uncommon. Exercising outside in the winter months certainly has its challenges. Turbo trainers for cycling and treadmills for running have meant that anyone can safely exercise inside. But this may be less engaging and beneficial in terms of the mental health than outdoor exercise. The answer: get outside!

There are several single-track roads in the parish and these provide peaceful, pleasant routes to run, walk or cycle. The difficulty with single-track roads is that often you may be required/obliged to stay close to the verge, or leave the road entirely!

Listening to music, or a podcast, or in some cases, chatting to a friend will mean less attention will be paid to traffic. Being a fan of listening to podcasts while exercising myself, I have found bone-conduction headphones far safer than regular models that fit into the ear. Using bone-conductors you are far more aware of approaching vehicles.

I am not a fan of stopping mid-run, but quickly hopping onto the verge can help passing vehicles. Luckily, the recently installed passing places on the way to the Brook Road have helped. My opinion is that cyclists should not always stop and pull over every time they meet a car. It is worth recognising that in many pro-cycling countries in Europe (e.g. The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy) cyclists are deemed to be more vulnerable than motorised vehicles, therefore protected. It is assumed that the driver is in the wrong if there is a crash between cyclists and motorists.

Winter months bring the dual problem of poor weather and a reduction in daylight hours. I would rather be lit up like Blackpool illuminations (whether running or cycling) in order to be visible than seriously injured! This can be a challenge as much of cycling apparel prioritises style over visibility. But there are many companies, with on-line catalogues, that offer a wide range of reflective clothing. I have used a running jacket with a built-in, removable light in the past. Lights are obviously a necessity when cycling in the dark and in the twilight.

I am a huge fan of a head torch for running. Using this, coupled with decent, visible, water-proof clothing means that I am more than happy to run in any conditions.

Icy conditions. When considering using my road-bike, I always err on the side of caution if I feel the road conditions might compromise my, or others', safety. Running can be difficult; slipping on black ice can lead to muscle injuries as well as being injured when falling.

The recent flooding seems to bring out some sort of primeval instinct to go and view the flood. I have used quality trail-running shoes and these have proved invaluable when covering water-logged, off road ground. Caution must be exercised when going near to floods, especially when in close proximity to the Brook or more particularly, The Thames.

I have found exercising over this winter more enjoyable than ever, perhaps as an antidote to the prevailing sense of cabin fever in these times! We are very lucky to have such a lovely parish to explore and exercise in.

Daniel Long

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No. 310	20	A. Gale
No. 350	10	M. & J. Wilson
No. 184	10	D. Beechey
No. 312	5	R. Brown
No. 134	5	V. Fuller
No. 124	5	J. Hooper

December 2020 Draw

No. 372	100	G. & K. Hunt
No. 132	50	Mr. Edgley
No. 208	40	S. Paterson
No. 230	30	K. Jackson
No. 393	20	S. Keen
No. 158	10	H. Blakey
No. 63	10	C. Russ
No. 171	5	P. West
No. 35	5	K. Holifield
No. 371	5	K. McLachlan

Where in the Parish?

Where in the Parish / Village has been a feature in Voices for many years. Here are some from over the last ten years with the year they appeared. They are all still recognisable, but can you identify where each is?



2010



2011



2012



2013



2014





2016



2017



2018



2019



2015



2020

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Nature Natters

Squirrels

You only have to walk through one of the London parks to understand why grey squirrels were introduced into England: they are very cute, and half of the tourists are photographing them. Red squirrels are native to Great Britain, but grey squirrels were introduced from America early in the 19th Century, and introductions continued till 1930 but by then the other side of these charming animals became clear.



A squirrel photographed in an Aston

The charge sheet is headed with robbing birds' nests, stealing bird food and stripping bark off trees. This last crime causes enormous damage to young trees and led to a bounty scheme in 1953 when the ministry paid a shilling for any squirrel tail taken into a police station. However, like most such schemes it had little impact on the population of squirrels.

Squirrels are not territorial but have a 'home range' though their control slips when there is a particularly good food resource, such as our bird table. They make a nest known as a drey and use it both for sleeping and for protecting their young. They produce two litters of three to four young a year and the parents care for them very well, so the population can grow exponentially.

The relatively new item on the squirrels' change sheet is that they carry Squirrel Pox Virus. Grey squirrels aren't particularly susceptible to the virus, but it is lethal to red squirrels which means that as greys spread into an area, the reds are wiped out. There is a move now to introduce Pine Martens as they prey on grey squirrels and could go some way to controlling them.

But how can I stop squirrels eating the peanuts I put out for the birds? Grey squirrels are said to hate pepper, garlic and cayenne, so I'm going to try adding flavour to the bird peanuts.

James Gray

Can you recommend a good.....

.....builder, plumber, carpenter, electrician, painter/decorator or landscape gardener? I have asked some of these questions while living here, and somebody has (for me) always obliged with the answer. Local knowledge is useful, and another good pointer is the amount of prospective work the contractor has. If he "can't come for six months" be patient.

Contrast this with the situation in a large town. A woman I know needed to have the guttering and fascia boards replaced on her bungalow. She consulted the local directory and selected a company which was allegedly (but not actually) on the Mybuilder.com list.

Two men arrived, and initially asked for £4,000 in cash to purchase the materials. Amazingly (she is a very intelligent woman) she gave them the money and off they went. Almost as amazingly they returned, with the materials, and carried out the job-not very tidily in places and without installing scaffolding over the conservatory. This resulted in some cracked panes of glass. The woman's brother became involved, and the men returned to make good the work and replace the broken panes of glass. A satisfactory conclusion but the general opinion was that the job had cost twice as much as it should have done.

One of the few times when I have been "done" was when I had my silver birch tree trimmed. A man who I vaguely knew called and quoted me £150 to carry out the work. When I winced, he explained that he had to pay to deposit the cuttings at the Dix pit tip. He then moved on to a nearby house to carry out an identical job but, after quoting the £150 price tag, he agreed to carry out the work for £60. I was a bit miffed about that.

Often the 'Next Door' site can be a good way of tracking down a recommended tradesperson and of course the Voices advertisers provide useful information!

Robert Jones.

Great Christmas Trail

After the success of the Firework Trail, Friends of Aston and Cote School decided to organise the Great Christmas Trail. This was a fun activity for families to do whilst out on a walk and had the added benefit of raising money for FACS. There were 17 pictures, which the children produced at school, to find around the village and thank you to the businesses and families who hosted pictures for us. Each picture had a letter and then you had to work out the phrase which was "The Christmas Story". We had over 30 correct answers and from those a winner was randomly selected. Thanks go to Andy at the Aston Repair Depot who kindly donated a gift voucher for the winner. Between the two trails we raised £191.32 so thank you to all those

that took part and we hope that you all enjoyed it. Perhaps an Easter Trail is on the horizon....we shall see what 2021 brings. For updates please do see our Facebook group - "Friends of Aston and Cote School" and if you would like to make a donation to FACS this can be done throughout the year at <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14459>

Kate Norton



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The Big New Year Aston Quiz.

Something here for everyone. How will you get on? We think 30 or more correct answers is an excellent score.

No longer there! In which roads were these buildings?

It's a (Covid) Craker

The best and the worst of this year's Christmas (Covid) Craker jokes. You decide which is which.

Q. Did you hear that production was down at Santa's workshop?

A. Many of his workers have had to Elf isolate!

Q. Why didn't Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem?

A. All Virgin flights were cancelled.

Q. Why are Santa's reindeer allowed to travel on Christmas Eve?

A. They have herd immunity.

Q. Why did the pirates have to go into lockdown?

A. Because the "Arrrr!" rate had risen.

Q. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph join their work conference call?

A. Because there was no Zoom at the inn.

Q. Why won't Santa lose any presents this year?

A. He's downloaded Sack and Trace.

Q. How is the pandemic like my stomach after Christmas?

A. It'll take ages to flatten the curve.

Q. Which Government scheme supports Christmas dinner?

A. Eat Sprout To Help Out.

Q. Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem?

A. Because they couldn't book a home delivery.

Q. Why is it best to think of 2020 like a panto?

A. Because eventually, it's behind you.

1



2



3



4



5. What day of the week does the Codfather fish and chip van stop in Aston?

6. Which evening of the week is bell ringing practice?

7. Which evening of the week does the Badminton Club meet?

8. The nature reserve at Chimney is owned by B.B.O.W.T. What do these initials stand for?

9. What was the alternative spelling of Cote?

10. How many parish councillors are there?

11. Which company runs the number 19 bus service?

12. What is the name of the head teacher at Aston and Cote School?

13. What year did The Bull Inn close?

14. Who is the leader of the Aston Ladies' Choir?

15. Which of these is nearest to Aston:

a) Ducklington b) Standlake c) Hardwick d) Lew

16. Who is A.J.S. of A.J.S Painting and Decorating?

17. Who owns the old chapel at Cote?

18. Which day of the week do Brownies usually meet?

19. What time is the post collected from the post box at the corner of Cote Road and Bull Street?

Which is the odd one out?

20. a) Frost b) Collier c) Dawe d) Bishop

21. a) Windmill b) Reedy c) Forty Acres d) Kingsway e) Oatlands

22. a) Lidgard b) Little c) Phillips d) Ottley e) Taylor

23. Who write the Nature Natters column for Voices?

24. And who sets the cryptic crossword?

25. What colour is the parish minibus?

26. What colour is the uniform of Aston and Cote School?

27. What colour are P.D. Hook lorries?

28. Which animal appears on the badge of the Aston Football Club?

29. Saint James was the patron saint of what?

30. Which football team's flag is sometimes flown in the Square?
31. Put these developments in order of construction:
Saxel Close Farm Close Kiln Close Foxwood Close
32. When did The Aston Community Shop open?
a) August 24th b) August 29th c) September 7th d) September 12th
33. What is the name of the club that has a monthly draw to raise money for the Community Trust?
34. Leaving our parish and entering the parish of Standlake you cross a bridge over which water course?
35. What are the names of the district councillors who represent Aston?
36. In the Voices bird survey which bird was most often seen in parish gardens?
37. What is the name of the clerk of the parish council?
38. Where is the highest point in the parish?
39. What year did Voices first appear?
40. What do the initials A.C.T.S. stand for?

Aston & Cote
Community
Trust

Sport and Recreation in Aston and Cote Community consultation

Our village hall and playing fields are there for us to enjoy recreational activities, whether it be stretching the legs, relaxing in the new playground or joining others in group activities such as ballet, football or Zumba. Scientific evidence shows that participation in such activities is associated with improved physical and mental health and brings benefits for society including positive development of children and young adults.

It's several years since the community voted to raise money for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) through the Parish Council precept. Installing and caring for a high-quality MUGA will be a significant long-term investment, made possible by the precept money and a portion (probably significant) of the S106 funds following construction of the estates on Cote Road – these funds must be spent on provision of sport, recreation and community facilities. The MUGA is our default option based on past surveys, but as the village has grown, we'd like to verify this choice and consider potential alternatives (e.g. some of the funds could be spent on refurbishment of the village hall).

At this stage, we'd like your views on the bigger picture – what recreational facilities would you like to have in the village?

A MUGA may still be your preferred choice (if so, please say so), but at this stage we welcome all ideas. Please contact us with your views at astonmuga@mail.com or reply to our social media posts in the coming weeks. A suggestion box will also be available in Aston Community Shop when coronavirus guidelines allow. We'd really like to hear from you – the closing date is Sunday 14th February.

Paul Farrow on behalf of The Sport & Recreation Project Committee

Happy New Year from ACS!

Looking back on 2020, it's amazing how far we have come since first mooted the idea of a community shop in Aston. Creating and running the shop involved a steep learning curve for all involved and we hope you agree that it has been worth the effort. But the only way that it will survive is for people to use it; the more that we can shop for locally, the better.

Aston Community Shop (ACS) will keep evolving in terms of our product ranges and, as always, please let us know what you would like to see in the shop. Plans are afoot for new greetings cards, improving our range of stationery items and supplying bird seed, together with adding to our ranges of general groceries, fresh food and store cupboard essentials.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Besom food collection before Christmas and continue to support the charity with donations. The donated goods were very much appreciated by the charity and, most importantly, by the recipients of the parcels that were distributed.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say a big, public thank you to all our existing volunteers. Thank you for your dedication and commitment, without which the shop simply couldn't function. We are lucky to have such a great team.

We are constantly on the look out for more volunteers. We'd love to be open all day on every weekday, but to do this we need several more volunteers to join our merry band! It would also be helpful if anyone could offer some time to help with cleaning the shop. Please get in touch!

We continue to invest in Covid precautionary measures to make the shop environment as safe as possible and we appreciate the cooperation of our customers in complying with these measures to help keep everyone safe.

Grant from Cedar Homes

Having submitted a grant application via the Parish Council, Aston Community Shop was delighted to be awarded a grant of £500 from the Blue Cedar Homes Project Community Fund (building the Tannery Gardens development in Bampton). This will enable the shop to purchase some additional fixtures and fittings to improve displays and increase their product ranges for the benefit of the community.

Here's to a healthy and successful year ahead for the shop and for us all!

Liz Wilson on behalf of Aston Community Shop

Lighting up the Parish

This Christmas, as a way of brightening up the mood across the parish many households put up their Christmas lights early and in even more abundance than usual. Thanks to Elaine Tuffery, Steve Lee, Becki Phili, Gem Govier and members of the Voices team for sending in these photos of just some of the splendid displays in Aston and Cote.

Richard Haines



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Who's Zoomin' Who?

Many of a certain generation immediately associate the word 'zoom' with Aretha Franklin's big 1985 comeback song, "Who's Zoomin' Who?" For those slightly younger it is also associated with an ice lolly which had not been seen for twenty years until it's recent comeback. But for all generations 'zoom' is now synonymous with videoconferencing much in the way that 'hoover' is for vacuum cleaning.

Of course there are many other video link systems e.g. Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, Meet Google etc. and all have been a major life link during the pandemic and especially over the Christmas period. - Due to tier 4 restrictions (in both countries) my niece who lives in London was unable to be with her parents in Dundee so they spent the whole day on zoom, chatting, co-ordinating Christmas dinners and opening presents (some of which were also in the wrong location!)

This also made me reflect on the different ways we use zoom in our villages. Of course with working from home lots of villagers video conference for work but it's also there for exercise/ fitness sessions (circuits, pilates, yoga etc.), home study (e.g. school, maths tutoring, Catrin's piano lessons), Church services (St.James / Fellowship), club and social meetings (1st Aston Brownies, multiple sclerosis society, fellowship, etc.) and not forgetting planning meetings (Parish Council, Community Trust, Voices, MS).

There is also a move to technical one-upmanship. Most people just use phone, ipad, tablets, lap top or computer but quite a few users have now been able to link these to their TV screen and projectors. Some even use a green screen facility to change the background to somewhere more exotic rather than just seeing the back wall of the room!



Richard Haines

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News from Aston & Cote CE Primary School

Community Week was a great success with each class reaching out to help the local community in a variety of ways. As well as road safety letters and pictures and letters for Aston residents and the residents of a local care home, Holywell Class supported the school community by planting a selection of bulbs around the school grounds – it will be wonderful to see the results of their hard work in the Spring. I am sure that many of you saw the beautiful display of poppies that Windmill 2 created for the community shop. At times like these we all appreciate the importance of our local community more than ever, so it has been lovely that we were able to continue with this important event in our annual calendar. If you have any suggestions of things that we could do for the community, please let us know by emailing office.3120@aston-and-cote.oxon.sch.uk. We thoroughly enjoyed participating in Five to Thrive for Children in Need – this helped us to look after our own well-being needs by focusing on a different theme each



Christmas nativity plays went online this year

day. From connecting with others to being curious or getting active, we really did have a wonderful week.

Although we were unable to visit the war memorial on Remembrance Day, we still marked the occasion by holding a short service on the playground. One representative from each class laid a wreath at the feet of two silhouettes of soldiers.

Anti-bullying Day also took place in November, during which all classes explored the theme of “United against Bullying”. The children in Windmill 2, Kingsway and Oatlands thoroughly enjoyed a socially distanced dance workshop in the school hall. They had great fun perfecting a variety of street dance moves or exploring their Knights and Castles theme through



Knights and Castles theme

dance. Kingsway and Oatlands were also lucky enough to enjoy a Medieval Day in their classrooms. The highlights included archery, dancing and a medieval feast!

December was also a very busy month at school. Children in every class enjoyed our Prayer Spaces event which was organised for us by Rev. Janice. The Year 6s spent three fun-filled days at Hill End, taking part in a variety of outdoor adventurous activities. Our Year 5 children took part in Bikeability training - we were very proud indeed when their instructors commented on the excellent behaviour throughout the sessions. Christmas nativity plays went online this year and Christmas dinner was served in the classrooms instead of the hall; another online hit were the Christmas stories that everyone enjoyed listening to each evening in the run-up to Christmas. Christmas certainly looked a little different this year but it was still great fun!

Fiona Taylor - Head teacher



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Sports News from Aston and Cote CE Primary School

This year our school cross country competition also doubled up as our entries for a virtual competition with schools across West Oxfordshire running the same distances as each other. Our best performance was in the U9 girls age group where we finished third! This meant that our top four runners qualified for a virtual county final.



The girls beat their previous times

We had our school games organisers come in and time the girls around our track over 1,500m. Amazingly all the girls were able to beat their times from before!

The girls are looking forward to hearing how well they have done in the finals.

Sam Hook



Wayne Austin

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Recipe

Braciolo (bra (as in brand)-shoal-eh) - Rolled steak, stuffed and cooked in a tomato sauce.

There are many versions of this Italian classic, depending on region (but it's best not to follow American versions)

Ingredients

Beef steak - You can use flank, which is lean and tender and easy to cut thin. However, I use braising steak, cut in half if very thick, cover with clingfilm and tenderise with a kitchen mallet (unless you want meat juices all over the kitchen). For four people I buy between 1 to 2 lbs (but the first time you make it will help decide how much you need in future)

Sea salt and black pepper
Flat-leaf parsley (can use other fresh green herbs)
Garlic, finely chopped
Splash of red wine vinegar
Kitchen twine

Optional

Fresh grated Pecorino or parmesan
Breadcrumbs
Olives (stones removed obviously)
Prosciutto
Other chosen stuffing that you can experiment with each time.

For the tomato sauce

Two 400g tins of Italian plum tomatoes. For the basic Italian tomato sauce, I use whole plum tomatoes and crush by hand in a glass bowl as I've been taught by an Italian (careful of splashing - see note about the meat) but you can use chopped. Add salt and pepper, a tablespoon of tomato puree and handful of chopped parsley and stir together (adding a drop of the red wine you'll want with the meal). Place in saucepan and bring to near bubbling, stirring often, then simmer

Method

Cut the beef into rectangles a little shorter than the size of a postcard and lay on a chopping board. It needs to be thin enough to roll. Season each piece with salt and pepper, and little of the chopped garlic and chopped parsley and/or any other herb you prefer. From here, whether you add the cheese or anything else is your preference. I was taught by my late father-in-law who was from Naples and we don't add anything else. However, you can lay some prosciutto on each slice and cover with the mixture of grated cheese, breadcrumbs, parsley and olives or play with it by making up your own version.

Roll up the slices of beef and tie at each end, cutting off the extra, splashing with a little red wine vinegar. Put some oil in a frying pan and fry the meat until browned, then when all are done, place them in the sauce and leave to simmer for at least an hour or preferably more. We use the sauce on pasta, and follow up with the braciolo, which should almost fall apart when you cut off the twine. I usually accompany braciolo with parmigiana melanzane and minted peas.

Parmigiana Melanzane

Slices of aubergine (no need to salt any more), fried in olive oil and dried a little on kitchen paper or brush with the oil and griddle/grill. Spread a little of the tomato sauce in a flan dish and layer the aubergine. Each layer consists of the aubergine, spoon a little sauce, sprinkle parmesan and small pieces of chopped mozzarella, then repeat. On the top layer place thin slices of mozzarella, cover with foil and put in the oven on 180c for about 20 minutes.

For the peas, frozen peas are good. Drop into a small saucepan with olive oil, chopped onion, chopped fresh mint and a splash of malt vinegar, then heat until sizzling and simmer, stirring occasionally.

This is a proper Italian classic meal you'll love.

Buon appetito
Russ Avis

Making the Challenge Your Own

Raising money for local charities

At the beginning of November a few of us put our heads together and organised the Carterton Christmas 12K to raise some money for local charities. The idea was to run or walk 12K, either in one hit or over a few days. You could make the challenge your own. Ad Astra Yoga got their members together to do 12,000 salutations over a number of zoom yoga sessions. One lady did 12,000 crunches. You could make it as easy or as difficult as you wanted but the idea was to include everyone.

We had 179 people enter from all over West Oxfordshire and beyond, including some great support from Aston and Cote. Between us we managed to raise £1,400 which is to be shared between two small local charities:



APCAM are a volunteer led organisation supporting families, children and young people struggling with all aspects of mental health in Oxfordshire and the surrounding areas

Got2B is an exciting Community Interest Company which has a vision to provide good quality Youth Work. They deliver a range of youth and community projects locally

All participants received a bespoke Christmas tree medal, which were delivered by hand for all local participants. All money raised went direct to the charities.

So what's next? There's talk of organising a 10K running/walking event in the area. Possibly an Easter virtual challenge. If you want to keep in the loop, please join the group 'Annual Carterton Triple 10K'

Simon Hoskins



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835750 or email

russcat21@gmail.com or

check out my website,

russmusicservices.co.uk

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We offer before and after school care at Aston & Cote Primary School. Where we have lots of fun activities in a safe and nurturing environment.

Monday - Friday

Breakfast Club - from 8am

After School Club - 3.10 - 6.10pm

For more information call Vicky on 01993 851883 or 0788 7711 454 or email vickyhickman1@gmail.com

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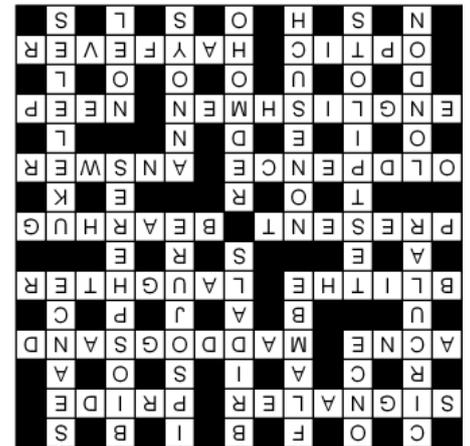
The Big New Year Aston Quiz Answers

1. Cote Rd.
2. North St.
3. Bull St.
4. Cote Crossroads. 5. Thursday.
6. Wednesday.
7. Thursday.
8. Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. 9. Cote.
10. Seven.
11. Pulham and Sons.
12. Fiona Taylor.
13. 1992.
14. Mary Wade.
15. Ducklington.
16. Alex Solomon.
17. The Historic Chapel Trust.
18. Monday.
19. 4.00 pm.
20. Bishop, the others have been vicars of our parish.
21. Forty Acres, the others are names of classes at the school.
22. Little, the others have been head teachers at Aston.
23. James Gray.
24. Caroline Gray.
25. Blue.
26. Red and grey.
27. Blue.
28. A lion.
29. Pilgrims.
30. Oxford United.
31. Foxwood Close, Farm Close, Kiln Close and Saxel Close.
32. August 29th.
33. The 500 Club.
34. The Brightthampton Cut.
35. Steve Good and Hilary Fenton.
36. Wood pigeon.
37. Ham Lane.
38. Elaine Ansty.
39. 1991.
40. Aston and Cote Thespian Society.

Where in the Parish – Answers

- 2010 Woodbridge Close
- 2011 Bench on the Village Hall patio area
- 2012 Duxford ford
- 2013 Culvert on the road to Chimney at the Great Brook
- 2014 Vicarage Close
- 2015 Cote House Farm, Cote.
- 2016 Jubilee Seat in Cote
- 2017 At the west end of the High St.
- 2018 Cote Chapel wall
- 2019 On the far side of the playing field close to where the footpath crosses the wooden foot bridge.
- 2020 Decoy airfield bunker, in the field on the Great Brook Road opposite the Bridle Bridge.

Crossword Solution



Andrew Long - Chair & Editor (Content);
Richard Haines - Treasurer & Editor (Technical);
Martin Bowley - Secretary & Lay up;
Paul Lock - Lay up;
Peter Dempsey - Lay up;
Liz Harper - Advertising;
Susan Haines - Distribution;
Lizzie Wood;
James Gray;
Brenda Smith.



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the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council for the grant.

What's On or Not!

Community Trust & Fellowship

Village Hall:

The Community Trust is following the current guidelines and the hall will re-open when permitted.

Vicky Fuller 851649 vicky.fuller@tiscalli.co.uk

Fellowship Centre:

No lettings until lock down restrictions are lifted.

Andrew Long 850271 ag.long@virgin.net

Church Services

Aston and Cote Community Church

We are currently meeting in line with government regulations, which require all in attendance to wear masks, to maintain social distance and not to interact between households. Our meetings involve a time of worship (albeit without congregational singing), a short children's talk or activity (with parents), and a talk (sermon). Our theme for the next few months is 'Reason to Believe - why it makes sense to be a Christian in the 21st Century'. Visitors are always welcome. Please contact Alastair

Sun	17	Jan	10.3	West Oxfordshire Celebration – online
Sun	24	Jan	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	7	Feb	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	14	Feb	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	21	Feb	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	28	Feb	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	7	Mar	10.3	West Oxfordshire Celebration – online
Sun	14	Mar	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	21	Mar	10	Worship & teaching
Sun	28	Mar	10	Worship & teaching

St James

1st and 3rd Sundays Holy Communion 9.30

2nd and 4th Sundays Family service. 9.30

This may well change due to current situation

The Parish Virtual Online Services (Zoom) If you are not yet joining in and would like to do so, please contact one of the wardens or the Vicar.

Shifford

At the moment there are no services at Shifford until the 2nd Sunday in March which will be Holy Communion

Parish Council

The Parish Council will be held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30. Currently meetings will be held using Zoom until further notice and details can be found on the Parish Council website www.astonoxon.com

WI

No meetings at The Village Hall

Wednesday Club

No meetings until further notice.

Brownies

There are no meetings at the moment However Brownies are still very active albeit on Zoom. Information :07887974468 or karenthegardener123@gmail.com

History Group

No monthly meetings, but we can help with information about the parish or family history enquiries..

Aston Community Shop

Current opening hours are:

Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 2pm and 5–7pm

Friday 8.30am – 7pm

Saturday 8.30am – 2pm

Sunday 9am – 12pm

Post Office

The Post Office at Aston Community Shop.

Monday 9.30-12.30

Wednesday 9.30- 12.30

Friday 12.00-3.00

*Aston and Cote
Produce and
Craft Show*

*Something to do while
we are in lockdown!*

It's Show Time!!!

*Sunday 12th
September 2021*

*Vegetables, Fruit, Preserves,
Cakes, Photographs, Children's
classes & a few fun ones*

Something for everyone!

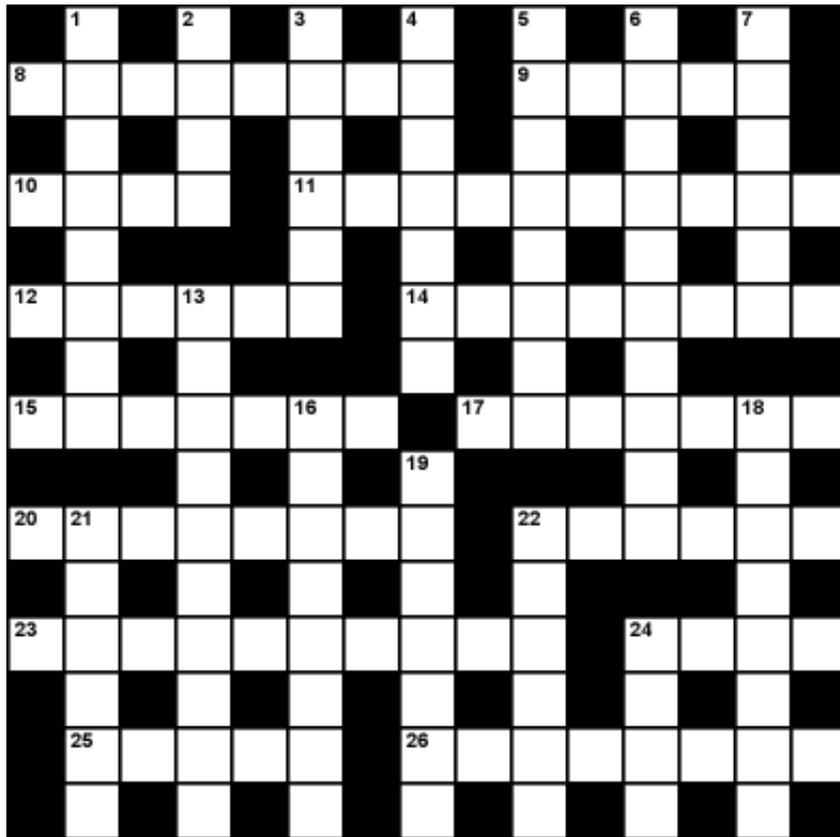
For a schedule please visit Aston and
Cote Produce and Craft Show

Save the date!



Festive Cryptic Crossword

By Caroline Gray



Across

- 8. Deaf communicator and a learner send the message (8)
- 9. Comes before a fall (5)
- 10. Spotty confused support (4)
- 11/23. Did man gag Mendelsohn to compose a song title (3,4,3,10)
- 12. Cheerful thible stirred (6)
- 14. Left instead of beheaded relative sounds amused (8)
- 15. Serpent snaked here attending gift (7)
- 17. Six footer embraces semi-enthusiastic call for a huddle (4,3)
- 20. Elderly vice president after 21 January was currency (3,5)
- 22. Content madman swerves in response (6)
- 23. See 11
- 24. Hammer head overturned a turnip (4)
- 25. The topic involves a measure (5)
- 26. Very English note congested summer asthma (8)

Down

- 1. Round conveyed by Sir Queue La (8)
- 2. Italian walnut converted previously (4)
- 3. Serve burnt iron around animal (6)
- 4. Curbs announced for nuptials (7)
- 5. Poise perverted round endless jury by the law itself (4,4)
- 6. Another confused message from Boris and sheep threatens earth's inhabited atmosphere (10)
- 7. Look round one cold attempt to contact the passed (6)
- 13. River before sanctimonious quantity try planes (4,6)
- 16. Unparalleled version of the unchosen (8)
- 18. Played in Hawaii UK and Spain before the French twice (8)
- 19. Half Santa's greeting holds up Rudolf's nose an instant for boundary of earth's crust (7)
- 21. Capital restyled mid-day and pointless light (6)
- 22. Leaderless loud speakers frustrates (6)
- 24. Lone ranged for Christmas (4)

Who says dogs and cats don't get on?



Mim, Tony and Nala off for their walk

I recently heard a lovely story from Josh at the garage about his Nan, Mim. Whenever Mim takes her dog, Tony, for a walk, her cat, Nala, always tags along for the ride like it's the most normal thing in the world. So, if you see them walking around the village together, now you know that it's not your eyes playing tricks on you!

Carly Holden-Taylor

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