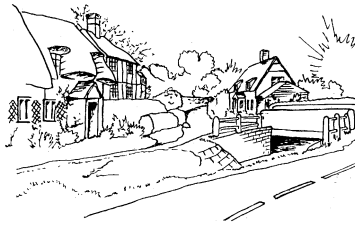


ARKESDEN PARISH COUNCIL



ARKESDEN PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 20 May 2024, 7.30pm in the Arkesden Village Hall

Bell-ringing

Update provided by Stephen Elvidge

It has not been a particularly easy past 12 months. As most will know there are six bells, and for several years now, the band has numbered seven, so despite the occasional absence of one or two of us, we have just about managed to ring at most Sunday services and weddings. However, after 20 plus years of loyal service on the third bell, Anne Wilson is moving from the village in a matter of days and Sarah Walker, our invaluable tollor of the fourth bell, has been unable to ring for some while now, though I know she'll be back again as soon as she feels able. This means we shall shortly be down to five experienced ringers and, while we are delighted to report that we have very recently secured one new recruit, it takes time to become "fully-fledged" so it will be a while before you will hear all six bells ringing.

The recent articles in the Village News and Parish Bugle did not elicit a single response and it goes without saying that, without fresh blood, the tradition of regular ringing in Arkesden, which has continued uninterrupted for over 50 years, will come to an end. Yes, we may be able to get ringers from outside the village to join us for weddings and possibly for the odd festival service (the carol and Christmas services, for example) but Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings will be silent. Some may welcome this but, as so many in the village have told us over the years how much they enjoy the sound, I'd like to think these would be very much in the minority.

So this is a plea to all those present to consider trying this historic and very "English village" pastime and so keep the bells in Arkesden ringing out. And if it's not for you, then please consider asking your neighbours and friends in the village who aren't here this evening if they could give it a go. Practice is on Wednesdays at 8pm and I'm happy to organise the odd Saturday morning session for anyone for whom this is inconvenient.

Cricket Club

Update provided by Mark Newey

Village cricket is going through some tough times; quite a few are closing down. So, although we often struggle to get 11 men out on the field, it's so heartening that there's a solid core to The Pheasants team. Last year wasn't our best record, even losing to Stocking Pelham, who are normally our first scalp of the season!

Anyway, this year, we're really excited to be starting the season with a "tour" up to Norwich to play against the team of an ex- Arkesden resident, with BBQ and overnight stay included: a great team-bonding session to get the season off to a roaring start! We're looking forward to striding out against Clavering in a T20 with BBQ and bar (so please come and join us!) on Friday 7th June and then Manuden on 23rd June, Chrishall 7th July and Stocking on 14th July.

We're always looking for new recruits of any age from 13 to late 60's, so don't hesitate to contact us.

Friends of Arkesden Church

Update provided by Tina McLean

The balance in the account of the Friends of Arkesden Church is £79,191. This includes part of a £12,000 donation made by ex colleagues in memory of Charles Rawlinson. The Friends are holding this money in the account and working with Jill Rawlinson and the PCC on how it will be spent. To date some of that donation has been used to improve the lighting in the chancel, to repair the footpath to the church and in the near future a plaque will be placed by the cremated remains in the north of the churchyard. We have all received notification that the Friends will receive a £3,000 donation from the estate of Kate Barwood.

The Friends have this year successfully completed their application to claim Gift Aid with £700 being claimed during this financial year. The only other notable expenditure was the annual insurance for events.

The focus of the Friends activity in 2023-2024 to date was to bring more people into the church, running community events including a Christmas Angel Festival and Spring Flower festival and supporting the PCC with the children's workshops.

The Chair would like to thank the committee members for their ongoing support and hard work which we are all very grateful for. Committee members are: Sara Evans (Treasurer), Ally Poultney (Secretary), Marion Shave, Suzanne Andrews, Sarah Roberts, Wendy Seaton, Ann Scott and Charlotte Pellew. Sadly Charlotte will likely be leaving the village this year and so we would ask for anyone, particularly from our younger parents, who is interested to come and join us. We'd love to have you!

Historical Society

Update to be provided by Rupert Bull

The Society has been in abeyance for most of the last year as a number of events, most notably my health, took precedence. I am looking to reestablish the society after the current cricket season, which takes up a lot of my time. I have a number of ongoing projects that I will be focusing on. Not least of which will be moving the collection of past editions of the magazines to a new accessible home and or digitalising them. Although that will be a long-term project and would need some new software.

As we were during the pandemic I attempted to find interesting speakers who gave us talks on topics that ranged from Arkesden around the time of the Norman conquest; the effect and power of the medieval church; Our Church, from pre Norman to the modern day and with it insights into the social history of our village through the centuries; and the construction and aging of timber framed houses in NW Essex and NE Herts. Whilst it is lovely to live in this picturesque village many people are interested in the histories of their houses many that date back for several hundred years. Discovering it is fascinating but needs to be collaborative. I need ideas and where possible also contacts about who to call regarding talks, or field visits. One thing I have been interested in setting up is a talk / walk on the evolution of agriculture in and around our village, any suggestion would be most welcome.

Millennium Field Committee

Update provided by Tom Macfadyen

I'd like to extend thanks to the Forster family for continuing to make the Millennium Field available for village use.

We've had fewer bookings of the field this year, with just one wedding in July and the annual motorbike meet in September.

This year we are reintroducing the children's Sports Day and family Camp Out.

This is taking place on Saturday 29th June, from 3pm. There will also be a football tournament for the children. Everybody is welcome and we will be running a bbq and a bar to raise funds for the field.

We are starting to plan for the replacement of the main climbing frame and rubber matting which are getting close to end of life. Substantial fundraising will be required to finance the replacements, which will need to come from a combination of grants, donations and fundraising activities.

We are always looking for volunteers to join the committee so please get in touch if you would like to help.

Neighbourhood Watch

Update provided by Anthony Robertson

Membership - The Watch 'WhatsApp' group has 89 members, some members having left to be replaced by new arrivals.

Incidents - Reports of car thefts in outlying villages continue. There was the attempted theft of a Toyota Hilux from Quicksie Hill early 2024, foiled by the owner. There is no discernible pattern other than their occurrence during the hours of darkness. It is recommended that residents leaving their vehicles on drives, fit a CROOKLOCK to the steering column.

Tools sheds and outbuildings remain targets of attack by travelling thieves however burglaries are very rare. Uttlesford continues to be a relatively safe place to live.

Your Co-ordinators are not aware of any other reportable crimes in Arkesden over this year although hare coursing continues sporadically and a farm in Clavering suffered theft. Occasional small amounts of fly tipping occur in Long Lane.

Road Safety - The condition of our roads and lanes continues to be of concern. Due to adverse weather conditions and an increase of use by heavy motor vehicles this has resulted in many potholes and damaged verges along our road network.

This means that in many places, vehicles cannot pass each other and vehicles are forced to stop to avoid collisions or nearby potholes.

Although the speed limit is 30 mph throughout the village and its approaches, it is strongly recommended that careful drivers keep to 20 mph at all times to permit maximum visibility of the road, verges and conditions ahead. Travelling at a lower speed may prevent damage to your suspension, tyres and other vehicles.

Parochial Church Council

Update provided by Cathy Miles

The average weekly attendance has increased to pre covid numbers this year to 15. In the autumn Arkesden welcomed 19 congregants for the Harvest Festival on the 1st October and had a very generous response to our Foodbank appeal. The Carol Service was attended by 120 adults and children and the Christmas children's workshop was well supported. Arkesden had 65 persons celebrate together on Christmas Day.

Review of the year

- The full PCC met four times during the year – February, June, October and December.
- In 2023, there were three weddings, one baptism and two funerals and two crematorium services followed by the burial of ashes in the churchyard.

At the end of November our vicar Reverend Margaret Davis retired and at present we have a vacancy for the post.

Village Hall

Update provided by Craig Dyce

The main functions of the Arkesden Village Hall committee continue to be to maintain the fabric of the building, offer the facilities to local residents and to organise social opportunities.

The two major expenditures in the year were the refurbishment of the wooden flooring (sanding and varnishing) and the replacement of the kitchen water heater.

Two social events were held: the annual Quiz in October was incredibly well supported and was once again great fun. Thanks, as always, to Alan Poultney for his organisation. The Christmas Bash at the beginning of December provided mulled wine and nibbles.

The hall continues to be well used. Dyce Fitness uses it daily for personal training and group fitness classes. It is also used by the various village committees and a local bridge club. Additionally it is rented out for parties.

After 25 years committed service on the Village Hall committee, Barbara Higgins, recently resigned. Her contributions will be sorely missed.

Village News

Update provided by Paul & Joce Johnson

For the Winter '23 edition of AVN Paul volunteered to support Rupert in the setting of the artwork for due to some health issues that Rupert had at the time. As he didn't make too much of a mess of it, Rupert agreed that Paul would produce the layouts in the longer term with him providing guidance where necessary. After that edition, with Cathy planning to move out of the area, Paul's wife Jocelyn expressed interest in taking over the editorial / content curation responsibilities. So for the Spring edition she compiled the copy and Paul & Joce worked in parallel (under Cathy's guidance) to publish the Spring 24 issue. There are plans for three further editions in '24; Summer – distributed in early June, Autumn – early September & then Winter – late November. Distribution around the village is carried out by hardy volunteers and print is funded by the PCC with Satu managing the advertising sales and payment for the print.

Paul & Joce moved to Glebe cottage in September 2022 and are super happy to contribute to maintaining this fabulous community asset.