

Arkesden Parish Council

The Village Hall,
Arkesden,
Saffron Walden,
Essex,
CB11 4HB
<https://arkesdenvillage.com/>



Annual Parish Meeting Village Committee Report

Bell-ringing

Update provided by Stephen Elvidge

The past 12 months has seen a renaissance in St. Mary's belltower. This time last year, with the imminent departure of Anne Wilson and family from the village, there was a possibility that the bells in Arkesden could fall silent so I am delighted to report that we have two new ringers – Claire Brady and Chris Honeyball – and they are both doing really well. With Claire and Chris now very much part of the band, we can look to the future with optimism. A third beginner, George Hoyes, sadly moved away with Cat, his wife, but hopefully he's found a new tower to ring in up in Lincolnshire.

That's not to say we can't do with more recruits. As Claire and Chris will testify, once you've learned to control the bell, ringing becomes very enjoyable, not least in the knowledge you are keeping alive a tradition that in Arkesden goes back more than 300 years. So come and give it a try. Practice night is every Wednesday at 8pm, with a chat over a reviving drink at the Axe after.

Cricket Club

Update to be provided by Mark Newey

Last summer was a bit of a washout: we had 4 games in the diary, including a tour weekend to Norfolk. Two games were rained off on the day (including the tour) and one village got their dates wrong and there was no game. The one game we did have, against Manuden, we won handsomely.

This year we have the same 4 village matches in the diary: tour date to Bertie Dannat's in Norfolk, Manuden, Stocking Pelham and Chrishall.

However, like a lot of cricket clubs we are struggling to get 11 players on board, often only pulling it together on the Saturday evening. And this year we struggling to get enough players for the tour match on 14th June, just a month away. So, if you know anybody who fancies a game or two during the summer, please let them know. Also, if anybody's looking to get more involved in village things, we'd love somebody to join the organising committee.

Friends of Arkesden Church

Update provided by Tina McLean

The Friends continue to focus on running fundraising and community events to support the maintenance of the church building and its grounds.

- Fundraising events: (April 2024-April 2025)

Summer Band Picnic on the Green raised £1631
Ranagri Concert in church November - raised £750
Christmas Wreath Making Workshop - raised £795

Additional funds received:

- a legacy from the Will of Kate Barwood for £3000
- donation of £1100 from the Girdlers Charitable Fund (thanks to Ian Seaton)
- Donation of £142 from Greta Greenhow fundraising

Use of funds:

£570 to repair and part replace the sound system in the church
£1025 to repair and replace the floodlights
£720 for the memorial stone for the cremated remains
Grounds clearance in churchyard £130
Insurance for events and volunteers £220
Purchase of a SumUp machine to enable payments to be taken online

The Friends also supported the decorating of the church for the Easter and Christmas services.

Many thanks to the members of the Committee who are Tina Mclean, Ally Poultney, Marion Shave, Suzanne Andrews, Sara Roberts, Wendy Seaton and Ann Scott. Additionally this year has seen additional volunteers providing fantastic support to the committee for events, specific thanks to Amanda Crabb, Susan Erb, Tom Dudson, Lydia and James Sleaford, Narin Chrimes, Paul and Joce Johnson and Fionnuala Flynn.

Historical Society

Update provided by Rupert Bull

The Society has been in abeyance for the last two years, due to ill health and some other issues, except the Facebook page which has continued to receive photos and comments. Now that we have a number of new faces in the village I will be looking to start it up again after the summer. I am still searching for a venue to house the collection of papers and a few artifacts from the village. I shall be contacting a few people in the coming days on this subject. If anyone has any ideas if they could please contact me directly.

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.

Last summer's Sports Day and family Camp Out on June 29th featured races organised by Cogs Greenhow and a children's football tournament run by Thomas Dudson.

We plan to hold similar events this summer (dates to be confirmed). Everyone is welcome, and we'll have a BBQ and bar to raise funds for the field.

Thomas was also the driving force behind the Arkesden Advent windows, which brought many of the village together at Christmas time while raising funds for the field. Feedback was very positive so we would like to organise the displays again this winter.

The field will be used for car parking for a summer wedding and the vintage motorcycle meet in September. In May, the Saffron Walden Bridge Club have been meeting in the Village Hall and using the field for overflow parking.

We are planning for the replacement of the main climbing frame and rubber matting as they are approaching the end of their lifespan. Significant fundraising will be necessary to finance these

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 Jonathan Boon

A big thank you must go to Tony Robertson for his continued support, updates and advice throughout the year.

The WhatsApp group has grown a little since the last AGM and now has 87 members, messages have come in reasonably regularly concerning observations and unusual movements through the village and local areas.

Unfortunately there have been a small number of incidents involving out-buildings here and in other local areas and we must remain vigilant to anything out of the ordinary.

Parochial Church Council

Update provided by Cathy Miles

Arkesden PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the Ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

Adopting the recommendations from the 'Church Working Group', established in 2023, a separate subcommittee was established to manage the church building, churchyard and finance and was named 'Arkesden Church Fabric, Grounds and Finance Team'. This subcommittee met several times during 2024 and made an effective start. This has allowed the PCC to concentrate on the religious mission of the church. The PCC have successfully recruited more members and is on a much more healthy footing. The Friends of Arkesden Church continue to fundraise in support of the church fabric.

The benefice started the year in interregnum and was fortunate to recruit Reverend Gary Fleming who was installed as Vicar of the Clavering Benefice in September 2024.

A diminished pattern of worship continued during the interregnum with services led by Cathy Miles and Susan Erb with occasional communion services led by visiting preachers. The benefice breakfast service continued on a monthly rotation. Since Gary arrived in September services have increased to lay led monthly morning prayer services, monthly communion services and festival services. There has also been monthly communion services to coincide with the village coffee mornings. Attendance at all the services has noticeably increased. We continue to enjoy the services of John Evans as our organist, supported by his wife Jenny.

The joint Childrens Messy Church between Arkesden, Wicken Bonhunt, Clavering and Berden continues to grow and is now well attended. The team is led by Jane Woodhouse and supported by Cathy Miles as well as members of other churches.

Village Hall

Update provided by Craig Dyce

As usual the committee organised a Village Quiz and a Christmas Bash. Both events were very well supported and proved very popular. with local residents. In addition two Wine Tasting evenings took place over the course of the 12 months. Attendance was good and taste buds were suitably challenged!

The committee was very grateful for a £3000 bequeathal from the estate of the late Kate Barwood and the finances generally remain in good health.

Expenditure continued on the general upkeep of the hall and in particular a new notice board was installed.

Simon Coop will be stepping down from the committee and he is thanked for his many years of service. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact either Craig Dyce or Mark Newey.

Village News

Update provided by Paul & Jocelyn Johnson

We are currently working on the Summer edition of the magazine that will be circulated in the first week of June and remain grateful to the volunteers who distribute AVN throughout the village.

Paul and I have now taken over the finances from Satu Lawrence, and so we are accountable for the funds raised from advertising, in the future we will provide financial statements to the Parish Council for their consideration.

We'd like to register our thanks to Councillor Edward Oliver from Uttlesford District Council and the Parish Council itself for their financial support with the printing costs.

Advertising revenue has dropped significantly since COVID and this year we anticipate a shortfall of around £350 with this year's planned 4 issues. This equates to around 1 issue.

In the survey we conducted earlier in the year, feedback was incredibly positive around the value the magazine provides and we received positive intent when participants were asked if they would consider making a donation to keep us running. We may seek to leverage this when publishing the September edition to help us fund the Christmas special.

Lastly a thank you to everyone who provides us with pictures, articles and event information – keep them coming please.