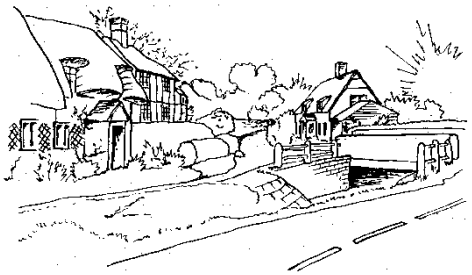
Arkesden Parish Council

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

I am pleased to report that we have enjoyed a year of real progress. Our newest members of the team, Claire Brady and Chris Honeyball, have progressed in leaps and bounds so that the older ringers (sorry Sarah and Jonathan) are having to re-learn methods of ringing we have not managed to ring for several years.

As steeple keeper, Chris has organised the replacement of one rope and the repair of another, the costs of which were met from our wedding reserves, that is what we have been paid over recent years for ringing at - you've guessed it - weddings.

On the subject of which, in September, we were delighted to have rung at Amelia (Vever's) and Ollie Brooks-Ward's wedding. We were also very pleased to have been asked to ring the bells at the funerals of Robert Patmore and Beti Newton, as well as at the memorial service for Barbara Higgins.

We held our AGM and dinner as usual on the Wednesday during Holy Week and were delighted that this year the Reverend Gary Fleming was able to join us at the Axe as our guest.

And now our annual plea: we still need new recruits to join us. As a small village, we do remarkably well to have a band to ring our ancient bells and to keep this centuries old tradition and pastime going. So no excuses. Wednesday nights at 8 o'clock. Come and learn a new skill.

Cricket Club
Update provided by Mark Newey

We had 4 matches booked for the summer last year: 2 wins, 1 loss and 1 cancellation.

- A tour to Norfolk to play the Keswick Cocks: the Dannatt family team. Very cruelly, it was rained off on the morning before we set off.
- Stocking Pelham: Unusually, we lost to Stocking, having really struggled to get a team together.
- Manuden: We beat them handsomely with Andy Woods getting 93 of our 203 innings. Youngsters, Charlie Birch and Mac Coleman, got a wicket each.
- Chrishall: Again, we won easily with Paul Birch getting a half century and Poppy Yorke and Ted Betts both getting a wicket.

We normally manage to scramble 11 players together at the last minute, but it's not easy. It would be a shame to lose the club: we've been playing every summer for 30+ years, the club having folded once

before. Most of us haven't played since we were at school. We have a couple of pretty useful players but most of us are pretty average, which doesn't matter: we play for fun and for the team.

One of the things we love is the youngsters (boys and girls) coming through: our team varies from 10-year-olds to those of retirement age. It's a wonderful afternoon even if we lose. We normally nip down the local pub or The Axe for a pint before returning home for dinner.

The Pheasants are an important part of the fabric of the village, so please help us make sure we get teams out. Here are this year's dates:

- Sunday 7th June vs. Chrishall
- Sunday 19th July vs. Stocking
- Sunday 26th July vs. Manuden

Friends of Arkesden Church
Update provided by Tina McLean

Fairly active year for the Friends supported by the new meeting structure and schedule and activity of the PCC and our vicar Gary Fleming.

The Friends supported events including - Dunwells Concert in May, Brass on the Grass and Arkesden in Bloom in July, Gardens Open at Great Becketts which raised £605, Ranagri concert in November, Stars & Candlelight decorations in the church and refreshments after the Carol Service

Current balance of the Friends is £70,200 - £20000 in Lloyds Bank and £50,000 invested in CCLA. In 2025/26 This was boosted by a donation of £1150 from the Girdlers as proposed by Ian Seaton.Thank you to hm and them.

With more active work underway in the church lead by the Fabric and Finance committee the Friends were asked by the PCC to use funds for the following key items:

Floodlight repair £1025
memorial stone for the cremated remains - £720
Grounds maintenance 3x year at £165 each
Tree removal and pruning - £750,
New noticeboard outside and board inside the church - £715
Daffodil bulbs -£715
Underpew heating - £15000

Membership: we were very happy to welcome 2 new committee members, Tracy Pemberton and Anna Gawthorpe. The other members of the committee are Sara Evans (Treasurer), Ally Pultney (secretary), Marion Shve, Ann Scott, Suzanne Andrews, Sara Robertson, Wendy Seaton

Our very grateful thanks to everyone who has helped with events run by the Friends and supported them by attending.

Historical Society
Update provided by Rupert Bull

The Society has been in Abeyance for the last 3 years due to various reasons, falling attendence at the few lectures that we had and a lack of general participation and a period of my ill health followed by my not getting properly organised.

Arkesden, despite being small, is a fascinating community that has its roots in very ancient times, through bronze age, Roman, early medieval (Danish and Saxon England); the Conquest, the change

from Saxon to Norman England; from monastic parish to lay Squires and Rectors, to being instrumental in non-conformism. It was in Domesday 1086 in the top 20% of parishes to being today a small Rural Parish.

We have had lectures on the effect of the conquest in 1066, early wooden structured houses and halls, the effect on monastism and religion in parish life and the Church which, in todays existence dates to the C12th.

It would be good to breath some fresh life into this. If you are interested in participating in bringing to life our history, to engage the youth and to help research and develop our understanding of the growth, purpose and changes in our village please, call me on 07785 514634 or the Parish Clerk who can forward your enquiry to me.

When you walk the footpaths look at the fields many of which have been the same for many centuries and wonder about the people doing the same as you. Whilst thanksgiving for harvest persists, the spring equivalent - beating the bounds is rare, what better way to explore the parish and, depending on your faith or none, possibly help in its prosperity.

Millennium Field Committee
Update provided by Tom Macfadyen

I'd like to extend thanks once again to Tash Carter and the Forster family for continuing to make the Millennium Field available for village use throughout the year.

This summer we held another Sports Day for the village children, with races, games, and—despite a rather mixed forecast—a handful of hardy campers who stayed out overnight. It was a lovely community afternoon, and we hope to build on it again this year.

Through December, the Arkesden Advent Windows returned and were very well received by the village. Even the persistent rain didn't dampen spirits, and it was wonderful to see so many people walking the trail and enjoying the displays. Our thanks go to everyone who created a window and to those who helped coordinate the event.

During the Summer, Playdale carried out a full survey of the field and the existing play equipment. They have provided us with several design options and cost estimates for replacing the main structures, which are now approaching the end of their usable life. Much of the funding for the new equipment is expected to come from local grants, with additional support from community fundraising.

The field continues to be used regularly for village activities and overflow parking when needed, and we are grateful to all who help ensure it remains a safe and welcoming space for everyone.
As always, we are looking for volunteers to join the committee. If you would like to help shape the future of the Millennium Field, please do get in touch.

Neighbourhood Watch
Update provided by Jonathan Boon

Firstly, our deepest condolence must be mentioned to Tony Robertson's family, his involvement in village Neighbourhood Watch was exemplary, starting the WhatsApp group and updating the village about local issues and incidents, and many tips on how to keep our homes safe. Over the last year Arkesden has experienced a number of incidents effecting both homes and garages, an increase in suspicious vehicle movements have been reported by people on both the main village and NW WhatsApp groups.

Parochial Church Council
Update provided by Cathy Miles

We have offered a mix of lay led monthly morning prayer services, monthly communion services and festival services together with monthly mid-week communion services to coincide with the village coffee mornings. Attendance at all the services has noticeably increased.

Our subcommittee, The Arkesden Church Fabric, Grounds and Finance Team, continue to manage the upkeep of the churchyard and church maintenance from the PCC. This is led and co ordinated by Alan Poultney. The team met several times during 2025 and facilitated various activities including churchyard work mornings, bulb planting, approved tree works and electric under pew heating.

This has continued to allow the PCC to concentrate on the Church ministry and mission. The PCC have successfully recruited more members and is on a much healthier footing.

The Friends of Arkesden Church continue to fundraise in support of the church fabric and to support the PCC fundraising concerts of which two were held in the Church (May & November) and one outside on Church Green (July).

Our Messy Church children's ministry attendance has fluctuated over the year, however, we have had at least 3 families at every session. The team continues to be led by Jane Woodhouse (Clavering) and supported by Cathy Miles as well as members from the Benefice.

Village Hall
Update provided by Craig Dyce

The Village Hall Committee has seen several changes over the past year. Mark N took over the role of Chairman from Simon C, and the bank mandate was successfully updated. A number of maintenance and enhancement works were carried out at the hall, including the addition of bark chippings to keep the rear area tidy, plumbing work to the toilets, the replacement and updating of all fire extinguishers, and the purchase of new prosecco glasses for events. The committee was also grateful to receive a generous donation of £3,000 from the Kate Barwood estate. In addition, village photographs from 1986 and 2022 were professionally printed, framed and are now proudly displayed in the hall. Finally, the committee would like to express its sadness at the passing of Barbara, who served on the Village Hall Committee for many, many years and made a valued contribution to the village community.

Village News
Update provided by Paul & Jocelyn Johnson

The year has passed so quickly, and as we write this report Paul and I are working on the next edition for circulation at the beginning of June.

Regular contributions, *The View from the Vicarage*, The Church service dates, *Greta's Gazette* and The Hundred Parishes are the foundation for each issue, and John's new farming Diary was a very welcome to Spring edition and as an addition to regular content. Village events and reports are always welcome and we would love the diary section to be fuller – so please keep sending us information on your activities.

From a financial perspective, below is a snapshot of income and outgoings over the previous and current year to date.

Sum of Credit Amount	Column Labels			
Row Labels	2023	2024	2025	2026
Advertising Revenue	523.5	440	441.25	650
Donations Received	200	300	950	300
Fundraising			840.82	
Opening Balance	1234.17			
Grand Total	1957.67	740	2232.07	950

Sum of Debit Amount	Column Labels			
Row Labels	2023	2024	2025	2026
Bank Charges			46.75	17
Print Costs	1300	1300	1655	325
Grand Total	1300	1300	1701.75	342

2025 was a notable year and at one point we had a significant shortfall. So we would like to thank all the village members who helped with our fundraising initiative. After sum-up commission they contributed £840.82 to help keep us going.

Other donations came from the PC (and thank you for your maintaining this in 2026), and one-off donations from Uttlesford District Council and Paul's company PWJ C&D.

Advertising revenue has increased in 2026, and the bank account stands at £1,235.99 – which will see us through the next four issues. We continue to seek further advertising revenue to make us self sufficient.

Thank you to the PC for your continued support. We both enjoy putting the quarterly issues together and are delighted that the village seems to so-value the Arkesden Village News.

Keep that content coming!