

# Ashfield Cum Thorpe 2017 Recorder's Report

## Social

### Community Council Events

#### Ramble to Earl Soham - Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>

Malcolm and Sue Pease organised a walk of roughly 7 miles. Walkers assembled at the village hall, where £1 each was collected towards Hall funds. The route was down Grove Lane, and Waddlegoose Lane, over the road and down the side of what is now The Willows, (which was being built), eventually arriving at Earl Soham, where lunch was taken at the Victoria pub. Some participants were given lifts home for various reasons and the remaining ramblers returned to Ashfield following a route roughly adjacent to Low Road; up past Sloper House and the previous site of Ashfield's windmill; then back to the Village Street and home. The weather was dry and sometimes sunny, although a bit windy.

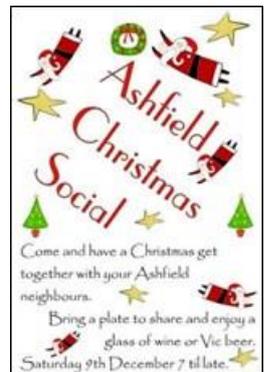


#### Quiz Night at the village hall - Friday May 26<sup>th</sup>

#### Quiz Night at the village hall - Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup>

#### Christmas Social - Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December

A well-attended evening with present and past occupants and friends and a nice way to start Christmas. Dick Knight prepared a Christmas Quiz, and there was a slideshow of photographs of Ashfield in the snow (there was no snow on this evening, although the weather had been very cold, and the hall didn't properly warm up all night!)



Most of the photographs had been collected for the Life in Ashfield Exhibition of 1996, with the earliest photographs dating back to the 1930's. They included photographs of the deep snowfall in 1986/7, when the Street was blocked at Whitepost Corner and numerous villagers helped dig out the road, before a tractor arrived and finished off the job. Photographs were also shown of the village pantomime of 1987; some of the participants still live in the village, and four were present at the social.

**Cyclists Visits** - The village continued to provide refreshments for two cycling clubs. The visits are a major source of income for the hall funds and an enjoyable occasion for both cyclists and residents

**Working Parties** - The village hall committee is responsible for caring for the building and grounds. Working party activities were arranged.

## Ashfield Ladies Group

ALG had another well supported and successful year. The meetings included the following talks and activities: -

- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January, the Realm of the Polar Bear, a talk by Chris Parfitt.
- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February, the Great Train Robbery and me, a talk by Myles Hansen.
- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March, Alzheimer Research, a talk by Jessica Hiscock.
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, Notes from a Head's Study, a talk by Steve Wright.
- Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June, Annual General Meeting, with a two-course dinner, wine and soft drinks.
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July, Visit to Christchurch Mansion.
- Tuesday 15 August, outing to Aldeburgh Summer Theatre.
- Tuesday 19 September, Running a B & B in Turkey by Jenny Gibbs.
- Tuesday 17 October, the Suffolk Punch Trust.
- Tuesday 21 November, Cherrie Christmas, Cherrie Wilson.
- Tuesday 12 December, Christmas Meal, Dennington Queen.



*Due to the double booking of the hall on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, the meeting was moved to Leyspring, where the ladies of Ashfield were spoilt by meeting in a warm and cosy living room.*

18<sup>th</sup> April meeting at Leyspring - Front Row L to R, Mavis Kerridge, Janet Ravenscroft, Anita Sharpe, Jacky Brame, Barbara Wilton, Cherrie Wilson, Sandra Measham, Margaret Whayman, Lyn Williamson, Penny Clark, Kath Burton, Dorothy Brenton, Jan Gouda, Jane Davidson, Doreen Baxter, Liz Wiggins. (photograph taken by Susan Hansen)

## The Brenton Bash (Gentlemen's Evening)

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May, Chris Sharpe organised this annual outing for the gentlemen of Ashfield and friends. The gentlemen were not supposed to have had advanced knowledge of the venue; participants were however asked to make their choice of food for the evening, and the more alert/suspicious individuals worked out the location from the naming of the dishes! Nevertheless, the bus journey from Ashfield was designed to disorientate the sleuths, and a circuitous route was taken to The Badingham White Horse. The attendees reported back that they had had a most pleasant evening.

## Mystery Meal (and "Finnish Lunch")

On 28<sup>th</sup> October the 30<sup>th</sup> Ashfield Mystery Meal took place. The first Mystery Meal was organised by Susan Hansen, who worked out the complicated formula to feed at least 16 couples with a 4-course meal at 4 different venues. This year's event was organised by Dick Knight, assisted by his neighbour Mike Harrison, who will take over from Dick next year. A record 24 couples took part, including friends, former residents and new residents. During the evening Dick announced that he and Gill were planning to downsize and move away from Ashfield in the spring.

This year, for the first time, a follow up event dubbed the "Finnish Lunch", was held at the Village Hall to finish the leftovers.



Diners at the Mystery Meal "Finnish Lunch".



Some of the past and present organisers of the Ashfield Mystery Meal, L to R, Chris Sharpe, Dorothy Brenton, Susan Hansen and Dick Knight

## Other Events

### Aesculus Viewing at Corner View



On 27<sup>th</sup> May Robert Grimsey of Ashfield held a well-attended private viewing of his arboretum for Ashfield residents. The organisation Plant Heritage, formerly known as the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG), promotes a number of "national plant collections" and Robert owns a national collection of Aesculus trees, with more than 80 types planted in meadowland of 2 – 3 acres, adjacent to his garden and vegetable patch. Light refreshments were served and there was a retiring collection for the Church, which raised over £350. The weather was warm and sunny, and a steady stream of villagers wandered

down to view the trees, which were mostly in flower.

## Church activities

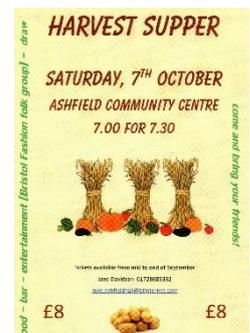
St Mary's Church, Ashfield is in the Mid Loes Benefice, together with Charsfield with Debach, Cretingham, Dallinghoo, Earl Soham, Hoo, Letheringham and Monewden. The Rector is the Revd Dr. Stephen Brian and the Churchwarden for Ashfield is Robert Grimsey.

### Church Services

Two services have been held in most months - Evening Prayers and Communion - including services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and a Communion service for the whole Benefice took place on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Harvest Supper

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October the Church organised a meal with entertainment from the folk group Bristol Fashion, at a cost of £8. The Harvest Supper clashed with other events held outside the village and consequently, attendance was low.



# Village Business

## Community Council AGM

This took place on Tuesday 2nd May in the village hall. Prior to the meeting, concerns had been raised about the level of support for community events - "We are always looking for new ideas and would very much like to hear your views and suggestions. We are a friendly group of people keen to carry on the "Village Hall tradition but need more active support from people in the village."

Mike Harrison subsequently joined the committee.

## Ashfield Welfare Trust

On 10th May, the trustees reported to the village and to the parish Council AGM, that they had "continued their recent practice of distributing the interest on its investments to households that supported a qualifying pensioner and this year 11 households received a cheque for £35". All three of the trustees, Simon Wilson, Dick Knight and Eric Brown indicated that they would be retiring from the Trust for personal reasons and they hoped that volunteers could be found within the village to replace them.

*(Note: The Ashfield Welfare Trust is a registered charity that exists to relieve persons resident in the parish who are in condition of need, hardship or distress)*

## Parish Council AGM

The meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May was attended by the Parish Councillors (Geoff Hazlewood, Simon Garrett, Ann Langley, Myles Hansen, Robert Grimsey, Ruth Hart); the Parish Clerk Simon Ashton; County Councillor Matthew Hicks; and other Ashfield residents.

Reports were given by and on behalf of the County Councillor, the Ladies Group, the Footpaths Group, Ashfield Welfare Trust, Earl Soham School Governors and the Village Recorder. Items mentioned included Vehicle Activated Speed signs and the new village noticeboard.

## The Great Village Noticeboard Controversy

In order to fulfil its obligation to display official notices, the Parish Council had decided to acquire a new noticeboard to replace the old one attached to the village hall. In March, a message was circulated on behalf of the Parish and Community Councils, advising that a noticeboard had been acquired, and that the plan was to install it at the entrance to the village hall car park near to the phone box where it could be more easily seen. Volunteers were sought to put in the poles.

By May the new notice board had been erected, but its appearance and siting caused much comment - mostly negative. Two grey plastic posts supported a large black plastic noticeboard with Ashfield Cum Thorpe written in white at the top, very visible from the road and partially blocking out the view of the old telephone box. One resident thought that it "looked like a big television".

The location of the board was subsequently discussed at the AGMs of both the Community Council and the Parish Council. At the Parish Council AGM, it was acknowledged that the Community Council was responsible for the upkeep of the village hall and hence the location of the board.

Within days of the Parish Council's AGM, the board was taken down and was eventually relocated next to the village hall, to the right of the entrance.



The previous position of the new notice board, and the notice board after relocation.

## Broadband problems

In Summer, a number of people in the centre of the village found that their broadband connection had become highly erratic, occasionally dropping out completely especially on a Sunday. Visits from BT engineers had provided no lasting benefit. In July it was noted that broadband speeds available via the BT network in Ashfield were typically pretty low, and the Parish Council asked village residents about their broadband experiences to determine what course of action was necessary.

On August 2nd, the Parish Council noted that: -

- 16% of respondents experienced no problems with their broadband service
- 29% reported significant problems
- 55% reported very serious problems

Which meant that only 1 in 6 of respondents were happy with their broadband service.

It was noted that the prospect of any improvement from the "copper wire" infrastructure to fibre did not appear to be imminent, the latest information being that areas such as Ashfield "are under consideration for upgrade between 2017 and 2021". County Councillor Matthew Hicks investigated and was informed that fibre connection to roadside cabinets serving Ashfield was expected to be implemented by the end of 2017; however, this did not materialise.

## Footpaths

Once again this year, the Footpath Committee walked the entire path network in order to inspect the paths, signs and bridges and to ensure that everything was in good order. The Committee reported after its annual audit that no route was impassable, although some places needed attention and some of the signposts would need to be replaced. It was also noted that the river crossings along Cretingham Lane should be replaced and re-opened during the current financial year.

## Elections

The Village Hall became the Polling Station for two elections: -

- Thursday 4th May, Suffolk County Council Elections, (Thredling Area): Matthew Hicks, Conservative, was re-elected with 2,066 votes. The other candidates were Stan Robinson, Labour (431 votes), David Payne, Liberal Democrat (455 votes).

- Thursday 8th June, General Elections, (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich Constituency): Daniel Poulter, Conservative, was re-elected with a majority of 17,185. The other candidates were Regan Scot, Green Party, Elizabeth Hughes Labour, Aidan Van de Weyer, Liberal Democrat, Stephen Searle, UKIP.

In November, our MP Daniel Poulter was referred to a disciplinary committee for investigation, after allegations were made against him of inappropriate behaviour towards female MPs. The allegations were vigorously denied by Dr. Poulter. The investigation had not been concluded by the end of the year. During this time, Dr. Poulter was absent from Parliament due to health problems.

## Property / House Sales and Lettings

The year saw the following changes: -

**Ashfield Place Farm:** In March, the letting of Ashfield Place Farm was advertised by Clarke and Simpson of Framlingham. The incumbent tenant, had been in place for 10 years. A total of 800 acres (324 hectares), of arable land was available of which 380 acres (155 hectares) was in Ashfield. Letting agent Oliver Holloway, Clarke and Simpson, said: "It is a highly productive commercial arable farm and is one of the largest blocks of land to come on to the market to let within this area for some time". Viewing mornings were held in April and the new tenant took over on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**2 Roll & Pork Cottage** was re-let to new tenants In April.

**White Railings** was advertised for sale in April (although the property had not been sold by the end of the year).

**Glebe House** was sold by the Church of England and new owners moved in in May.

**Thatch End** was sold in October, and Tony and Elaine Elliot moved away from Ashfield. Before their move to Thatch End, Tony and Elaine had lived at Acresfield, Ashfield, moving in to the village in the 1980's

**The Willows** a new house at the Northern end of the village on the road to Kenton, was completed and the house was occupied.

**High Row Farm** - Towards the end of the year, building work started on a plot of land that had once been the farm's vegetable patch. Vehicular access was constructed a number of years ago, but no building work started until 2017.

## The Elements

### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October Sonic Boom

A loud noise like an explosion was heard at 8.40 am. There was much discussion on Radio Suffolk about the mystery noise, with reports coming in from across Suffolk Norfolk and North Essex. The radio station later reported that the noise was caused by a sonic boom. Following a security incident on a Ryanair flight from Lithuania to Luton, two Typhoon aircraft had been scrambled from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire and cleared to go supersonic over land. The plane was diverted from Luton to Stanstead with the military escort. The security alert was later reported to have been a hoax.

### October 16 Red Sky in Ashfield following hurricane Ophelia.

The remnants of hurricane Ophelia did not cause any major damage in the area but did produce an unusual red sky, as seen in the pictures below, taken in Ashfield by residents Simon Garrett and Dick Knight.



## News of Former Ashfield Residents

### Carol Garrett

In December former resident Carol Garrett was included in the New Year's Honours list. Carol was awarded an OBE for her work with Suffolk County Council Trading Standards. Carol had lived at Winterfold Ashfield for many years.

### Revd. Canon David Boyes.

Revd Boyes was the Priest in Charge of Earl Soham, Cretingham and Ashfield between 1985 and 1996. He died in intensive care shortly after major heart surgery and his funeral took place at St John's Church in Woodbridge on Friday 26th May.

### Dick Spalding

The funeral of Dick Spalding was held on Monday 25th September at Seven Hills Crematorium, Ipswich. Dick & his wife Kitty moved away from Ashfield some time ago, having previously lived in Sunnyside Corner. They had both been active in village life for many years.

### Edward Bowman

Edward was staying with his son Max and former wife Alison in Ashfield over the Christmas period. He became ill on Boxing Day and was taken by ambulance to Ipswich Hospital. He suffered a brain haemorrhage and died on 30<sup>th</sup> December, without recovering consciousness.

Edward was a former resident of Church Farm House and lately of Debenham. He was well known in the village, a character who played his part in community activities and who continued to support Ashfield after he moved away to Debenham.

Anita Sharpe

Village Recorder

Merryvale House, Ashfield-cum-Thorpe