



May 2011

Diary dates: Ashton Open Gardens, 11-12 June. See back page.

Willow Cottage: another twist

As a ten-year dilemma over the future of Willow Cottage seemed to be nearing its end, a likely new delay has emerged. Owner William Gilder, of Gretton Fields, Cheltenham, looks set to win his latest planning application to extend Willow Cottage and to build a matching new cottage alongside it. But if successful, he plans to sell the site, possibly in two parcels, rather than starting any work himself. After talks with officials, the current proposal is his fifth and most modest in scale. It envisages just one new home, between Willow Cottage and the old post office, also set end-on to the road. Unlike the previous plan to site up to six travellers' homes, which attracted over 30 objections, the latest has drawn just one public comment - and that in support, from former objectors Marion and Malcolm Nelson.

The development was

"much more sensitive and appropriate," they wrote to Wychavon, and welcomed the restoration of Willow Cottage, "something many residents have long wished to see."

Wychavon officials have also reported favourably. One praised the "careful design," and assumed the new house would subsidise the necessary work on Willow Cottage.

The parish council has raised no objections to the plan, and Cllr. Adrian Darby said: "For the first time the applicant has tried to meet the district council's objections to his proposals."

Mr Gilder said he thought his original plan for five terrace houses best suited the village, but officials had worked well to help him find another option.

However, he now seems unlikely to build it himself. He told *Ashton News* that he had other projects and "would probably sell the site," possibly splitting it.



Nose dive: Looking like a huge insect, the burnt-out wreckage of the van dumped and torched off Back Lane.

Car clue to van inferno

The driver of a Burgundy Nissan car may hold the key to the mystery of the van that exploded in flames off Back Lane.

Simon James was preparing a party for girlfriend

Vanessa Mayo's birthday in their rear garden on Saturday 30 April when he saw the car drive across the field below their home in Willow Close.

This seemed odd, but he thought little more about it as the party went on until the early hours of Sunday.

Then shortly after it ended around 2am, friend Clare Ballinger returned to say the field was on fire.

"It was very dry and I was worried about the crop so

Continued page 2.

The parish council is to complain to MP Harriett Baldwin and county councillor Adrian Hardman about the state of the road from Ashton to Beckford, after Ray Satchell called it "a disgrace."

Doreen Cope said the Grafton to Beckford stretch was better maintained in case traffic was diverted from the A46, but school buses made the problem worse by using

Protest over Beckford road

the route when they were supposed to go down The Groaten. The parish will therefore ask the county council to remind bus drivers to take the latter route.

◆ Mrs Cope urged villagers to remove bills after events, to avoid them becoming eyesores on posts and noticeboards.

Plants shoot ahead after dry spell



Farm life

by Charles Archer

Everyone I have spoken with lately has been in agreement that we could do with some rain.

Following the snow and the very low temperatures at the start of the year, it almost appears that the weather has been in fast forward mode during the past two months.

Many flowers and shrubs are now a month ahead of their normal stage of growth, and some stages have passed over all too quickly.

Most of the cereal crops are looking well despite the lack of moisture but are just beginning to show signs of stress.

Management still follows the same pattern with fertilizer and sprays being applied as normal.

There is enough grass in the fields to feed livestock but not sufficient to make a good crop of hay or silage as it will soon produce a seed head without any real length to it.

Lambing has finished with pleasing results it is always a joy to see the growing lambs gambolling across the pastures and cattle are now back in the fields from their winter quarters.

It's pouring with rain. Hooray!

Plea to save avenue to Ashton

Ashton's potentially lovely avenue of trees, planted for the millennium, is at risk of being lost, the parish council has been told.

The 25 ash, plus maples and laburnum, line 370 yards of The Groaten, but are being overwhelmed by hedges, Jeff Fletcher said.

He urged the council to set aside money to trim the hedge allowing the trees to prosper.

At the annual meeting, David Cotton made an impassioned complaint about the hazardous footway from Old Manor Farm to Willow Close.

The council agreed to ask county Cllr Adrian Hardman, who had volunteered to pursue the matter, to meet Mr Cotton.

Frank Moore raised concern about the footway from Bakers Lane to the pub and it was agreed the next meeting should also consider the unfinished tarmac footway down The Groaten.

The parish council agreed to provide a bin for dog waste between the middle school and Cornfield Way.

It reiterated its anger that the county would neither provide nor fill a grit bin at Cornfield Way, and may complain to the local MP.

The council agreed a rate subsidy of £190 for The Star. As a result, the rest of its rates bill will be waived by Wychavon. It also gave £500 to the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Please miss, can I have some more?

School dinners can be great, but never as good as when pupils from Bredon Hill Middle School were invited into the kitchen of the Belle House Restaurant, Pershore, to watch chef Sue Ellis prepare three desserts for the BBC TV *Great British Chefs* programme.

Accompanied by lucky teacher Debbie West, they tried all three puds, and chose the apple crumble as favourite. "I always wanted to be a chef - now even more," said one. "I loved every minute," said another. Sue even invited them to attend the final, but sadly neither she nor the crumble went through.

Playgroup heads for 40

Ashton playgroup plans to celebrate its 40th anniversary with a display of pictures and stories bringing its history to life.

Supervisors Mirka and Ruth thanked all who had contributed so far, and hoped others would do so.

Thanks to Lottery funding, Birmingham artist Sally Harper-Kenn will lead the first of its special events, a glass painting workshop in the Green Room from 10 to 2 on Saturday 23 July, followed by refreshments.

All are welcome. Call Mirka 882105 or Ruth 882014 by July 7 to book.

The group certainly has plenty to celebrate after its most recent Ofsted report. This showed a strong trend of continuous improvement - "satisfactory" in 2005, "good" in 2007, and now with six areas judged as "outstanding."

"We thank all our children for making us proud and all who support and motivate us in our work," Mirka and Ruth said.

New guides for jobs and voluntary posts

Bredon Hill Business Group, based at Overbury Estate, is trying to support local businesses with a free recruitment advertising service for members. Vacancies can be seen at www.bredonhill.info.

Evesham and Pershore Volunteer Centres have details of many positions for volunteers, updated monthly.

For more information, go to www.do-it.org or contact Val Jackman, 01386 554299.

Van blaze **From page 1:** I called the fire brigade," he said. "I went down with Nessa. When we realised what it was, we made a hasty retreat."

The car exploded, and with flames now leaping up, he rang the fire brigade again. "There was definitely no vehicle there when we were out. I reckon that whoever was driving the Nissan was scouring the

area then waited until no-one was about."

The Ford Transit van had been driven 50 yards across Charles Archer's wheat field from near the old railway bridge on Back Lane, then dumped down a steep bank into Carrant Brook before being set on fire. It was well alight by the time a fire engine arrived from Evesham.

On your marks for run-around supper



Following last year's success, there will be another Ashton Run Around Supper on Saturday July 2, with another chance to meet new people, explore the village and enjoy its culinary delights.

"It was great fun, with a lovely atmosphere," said one of the 2010 participants. "A brilliant Saturday night ... a wow success," and "the whole evening was absolutely great," said others.

This year participants will meet at the Village Hall at 7pm for a free drink, then move to their first hosts for a starter, then to a second for a main course.

A draw will match hosts with pairs.

Singles are welcome too. This time there is no requirement for non-hosts to provide puds. Instead, desserts will be served for all back at the Village Hall at 10pm, with a bar until midnight.

Tickets cost £5 per person if you are acting as a host, £15 if not.

All proceeds go to Ashton First School and playgroup.

Please return the form on the right, with your payment (cheques payable to Ashton First School PFA,) to Claire Kirke, Plough Cottage, Elmley Road, 881133, or to Rachel Evans-Cook or Lucy Griffiths at the First School. You can email claire.vincent@hotmail.co.

If you can provide a tombola prize, please give it to Claire Kirke.

I would like tickets. The price is £5 each if hosting, £15 each if not hosting.

Total enclosed £.....

Name(s)

Address

Tel:

I will (tick ✓ where appropriate and state number below)

Host a starter

Host a main

This will be sufficient for 6 8 10 12 people (ring number)

Dietary requirements

Good food for good causes

A coffee morning will be held at 10.30 to 12.30 on **Friday 20 May** at Sherbourne House, Elmley Road, opposite Hillside. The event, in memory of Mrs Sylvia Evans, is in aid of Evesham Macmillan Unit. Entrance is only £2.

The price includes home-made scones and coffee. Cards, cakes, plants and jam will also be on sale.

A ploughman's and pud lunch at noon on **Sunday 17 July** at the The Old Farmhouse, on the corner of Elmley Road and The Groaten, will aid the CATCH project in the South African township of Mzamomhle. A minimum donation of £4, (children over five £2) is suggested.

The project, supported by Ashton since 2007, gives foster care, education, a safe environment and training to AIDS orphans.



Come taste our local cider

They made it; you drink it. What could be better?

When son of Ashton Peter Creese (right) bought and restored an old cider press he knew where to find the best apple crop.

They came from Richard Hughes's orchard at Graf-ton. You can sample the results in Ashton from 7 to 9pm on Saturday 18 June

at Ashbee, Wood Lane.

The evening includes a bread, cheese and pickle supper washed down with the scrumpy cider made by Peter and father Colin (second from left).

Tickets cost just £5. To book, call 881266.

Proceeds will go to the Meningitis Research Trust and Asthma UK.

Tea service

The celebrated Tea (and cakes) on the Lawn will be served at Rails End Nursery from 3 to 5pm on Sunday May 22 with music from Smooth Sounds. The raffle is in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Meanwhile it's business as usual during spring and summer while the nursery is on the market.



Ashton Open Gardens, 11-12 June

Already pretty as a picture - and this year 24 gardens will be open, two more than in 2010, and some for the first time. The event includes a 'Grow Your Own' theme, a show of botanical paintings by RHS gold medallist Beth Phillip, even a Hunt the Cauliflower quiz for children.

Tickets cost £5, (children free) and cover admission on both days from

1 to 6pm. Discounts are available for parties of ten or more booked by Friday 27 May.

Visitors can buy refreshments, light lunches, ice cream and plants. St. Barbara's and community projects benefit from the proceeds.

If you can help on the day or before, please contact John Dodge 881487 or Malcolm Nelson 881778.

Search out those Ashton forefathers

This weekend St. Barbara's will for the first time offer free access to its baptism, marriage and burial registers. The detailed information covers nearly 400 years from 1568 to 1953. Also available will be local census information, taken every ten years from 1841 to 1911.

Ex-churchwarden John Dodge has compiled all the information on a database, enabling anyone to take printouts of family details, from 10am to 5pm on Saturday 14 May, and 1 to 5pm on Sunday 15th.

Visitors are invited to bring their own photos or family trees to share.

An exhibition, part of the Cotswold Festival of Churches, and running until Sunday 22 May, tells the 900-year story of St. Barbara's, including pictures, documents and a slide show. A history booklet, children's quiz and refreshments are available.

International stars end season on high note

A trio with a string of international concert dates brings an outstanding Parish Music season to a close at 8pm on Saturday 28 May.

Ashton Fun Run

Run, walk or skip. Try Ashton's first Fun Run at any age, any way you wish around a mile course on the Playing Fields. The date is Saturday October 8. Contact Jo Brown 881860 if you can help. Watch for details.

Annual thanksgiving

The service to thank all church supporters takes place at St. Barbara's at 11am this Sunday, May 15. On 12 June, a Songs of Praise service will thank all who make our Open Gardens so successful and beautiful.

Shindig gets green light

The successful Shindig programme that brings music and drama to Ashton seems set to continue for four years after its new organiser, Live & Local, won Arts Council backing.

Live & Local won small increases in its funding until 2015. New Perspectives Theatre, which brought *Lark Rise to Candleford* to Ashton this month also won renewed Arts Council support.

◆ The second week-long Vale Arts Trail opens on Saturday 21 May with a free workshop at Honeybourne Pottery, photography demonstrations at Evesham Camera Club, and art classes at Evesham and Bishampton. Call Mark or Wendy on 424728 or see www.valeartstrail.org.

◆ Colin Davison, of Bakers Lane, appeared on *Woman's Hour* to discuss *Through the Magic Door: Ursula Moray Williams, Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse* (Northumbria University Press, £18.99), his biography of the Beckford author of classic children's stories. Signed copies are available from him, tel. 882364, for £15.

The Lendvai Trio - Dutch violinist Nadia Wijzenbeek, Swedish Ylvali Zilliacus on viola, and English cellist Marie Macleod - have toured Europe and the USA, and played at London venues including the Wigmore Hall.

For their date in Overbury Church they will perform the same trios as on their programme at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in June - by Sibelius, Martinu, Beethoven and Reger. Admission costs just £10 on the door (students free), with a chance to meet the performers over a glass of wine or juice at the end.