



## Council chairman barred for a month

Ashton parish council chairman Gerry Barnett has been suspended for a month for failing to declare an interest in a planning application that affected his sister.

The issue arose after Mr and Mrs Frank Moore asked Wychavon to allow a rear extension to their home, Acacia Cottage, Elmley Road.

When the parish council was consulted, it was split in its official views: two members supported the plan, two opposed it.

Cllr Doreen Cope, who lives next door at Rockland Cottage, abstained from voting but later lodged an objection as a private citizen.

The Moores' son-in-law, Anthony Sanger-Davies, who lives on the other side of Acacia Cottage at The Sett, is also a parish councillor. He abstained too, but wrote privately to support the plan.

Cllr Barnett was one of two parish councillors who officially opposed the application.

As a result, Mr and Mrs Moore complained that he had failed to declare an interest, because Mrs Cope is his sister.

Two weeks after their complaint, Wychavon planners rejected the plan due to its impact on both side properties.

Now its Standards Com-

### 'Minor' breach and long public service make suspension brief

mittee has suspended Cllr Barnett for January.

It called his breaches of code relatively minor, considered his long public service, and recognised he had not acted wilfully.

The body pointed out, however, that he had received training after a similar complaint in 2007.

A new application for a shared extension for The Sett and Acacia Cottage has now been made.



*The Iceman goeth: No, not one of the hardy volunteers for Ashton's new Snowline during the bad weather, but Tim Miall was carrying a special Ashton parcel. Story, page 4.*

## Host of groups seeking your help as a volunteer

In Ashton and beyond, short and long-term, there is a multitude of organisations looking for help during 2011.

◆ Tiddesley Wood nature reserve, on the Croome road from Pershore, are seeking volunteers. Call 01905 754919.

◆ Pershore Volunteer Centre has many posts to offer, including helping a prison visitors' play centre, trustees for a rural project, canal helpers and with June's county literary festival in June.

Other positions involve helping schools, libraries, charities and the elderly in many roles - even organising a whist night.

Call Val Jackman, New Road, Pershore, 554299 ext 223, for details.

◆ The 2011 census will also create 75 paid jobs in the county.

About this and other opportunities, contact Helen Gray, Other opportunities can be seen at the Evesham centre, Brick Kiln Street, 40165, or email [F113@census.gov.uk](mailto:F113@census.gov.uk).

## Now it's open veggie plots

The theme of Ashton Open Gardens on **Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June** will be 'Grow Your Own'. If you have a fruit or vegetable plot you'd be happy to share with visitors please get in touch.

Open Gardens raises funds for our village each year, but this is only possible through the efforts of volunteers. There are several jobs which need doing before the event itself. Can you help?

If so, please contact John Dodge on 881487.

## Snow drifts give way to snowdrops



### Farm life

by Charles Archer

January in Ashton has new-born lambs already in the field, we have a new grandson and snowdrops are in bloom!

The sheep have been out all winter enduring the deep snow, with extra hay supplementing their diet. They were joined by those of all ages sledging, snow boarding or just enjoying the winter wonderland. It is the first time ever I can remember sledging on Christmas day.

Most of the crops were sown before winter set in leaving only 10 per cent of the ground left for spring sowing. Crops look well and there is new grass, deep snow tends to act like a fleece encouraging crop growth; the old sages said it acted like fertilizer.

They also said that on Candlemas Day (February 2<sup>nd</sup>) a farmer should have "half his oats and half his hay" as winter is only half way through.

### Bible anniversary

St. Barbara's is marking the 400th anniversary of the King James bible by inviting nominations of favourite passages for inclusion in family services. Contact Alex or Malcolm to select yours, or fill in the flyer in the 2011 programme.

## Snowline steps up to challenge



Ashton Snowline was launched after the severe weather at the start of 2010; at its end it proved its worth amid the heavy snow that came again.

Volunteers took village people to clinics in Cheltenham, to trains, and picked up prescriptions.

Organisers Sarah Lane and Nadine Simpkin said they were pleased how well the system worked. Anyone needing help - emergencies only -

*Winter woollies: Some Ashton residents were well prepared, but others found Snowline invaluable. Photo: Roger Umpelby.*

should contact them on 881540 or 881162.

They also know a few people willing to clear snow from front paths for those who are struggling.

Thanking all who helped, Nadine said, "We are fortunate to live where people are willing to help their neighbours. The Big Society is already happening in Ashton."

The big freeze also saw many water leaks, many of which were wrongly reported to the county council, which deals only with highway drainage.

Worcestershire CC spokesman Roy Fullee urged the public to report problems directly to Severn Trent on 0800 783 4444, or via its website, [www.stwater.co.uk](http://www.stwater.co.uk).

### Lively agenda for WI at 70

Ashton Women's Institute celebrates its 70th anniversary next month and has arranged an exciting programme.

The February meeting will feature memorabilia from the archives, an American supper and three humorous sketches by its new drama section, led professionally by Marion Nelson.

The coming year includes talks by Colin Davison on his forthcoming biography of local children's author Ursula Moray Williams, and Rob Hemmings on the history of Evesham's Regal Cinema.

Sonia Cooper will present her performing dogs from TV and films, Wendy Hill will come from the Elgar Centre, and member Margaret Darby will give a class in sugarcraft.

Weather permitting, there will be an August garden meeting with its twin WI from Ashton Keynes.

### .. and the playgroup is 40

It's 40 years this year since a playgroup was formed in Ashton.

Did you attend the playgroup, or did you have children who went there? Were you a mother's help? Do you have any photographs of activities?

It is hoped to organise events to mark the anniversary, including pottery and felt-making workshops, a light and sensory session, a quiz, chocoholics evening, bike ride and a celebration of young musicians.

To help, contact Mirka Alldrick on 882105 or Ruth Barnett at 882289.

**St. Barbara's annual meeting** will be held at 7.30 on Wednesday March 2, preceded by refreshments. All are welcome to hear what has happened in the past year and about plans for 2011.

## Your parish council needs you

Ashton residents have been urged to stand as parish councillors when elections are due in May.

Cllr. Ted Williams made the appeal at the January meeting of the parish council. He said later:

"We should get folks to stand to ensure that an election takes place.

"If the end of our period in office does not get decent publicity, the village will have the same team in place whether they like it or not.

"We need more than seven to stand for there to be an election."

Optional seminars for potential candidates will be held at 6pm on Wednesday February 9 at Evesham Civic Centre, and 6pm Thursday 10 at the Northwick Hotel.

For details, call 565437 (Electoral services) or e: [elections@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:elections@wychavon.gov.uk)

The parish council meets again at 7pm on Tuesday March 3, starting with the annual parish meeting when residents can speak and before which can ask for items to be put onto the agenda.

## Get fit kit now in sit

Exercise equipment has been installed at the playing fields helped by grants from Wychavon and Open Gardens.

It is suitable for over 12s, with instructions on the three largest pieces.

"Early comments are very positive," said Brian Stephens of the Social Centre.

# Council aims clean up at litter and dirty dog owners

Dirty dogs and careless members of the public are coming under attack in two initiatives to clean up Ashton.

At the January parish council meeting, the problem of dog mess was again highlighted.

In response the council is to place "No fouling" signs around the village, warning owners that they risk fines if they fail to clear up their pets' mess.

Members also urged help for the litter-pick to take place at **10am Saturday February 5**, meeting at the playing field. Adults and accompanied children are welcome.

In spring, St. Barbara's is also seeking help to clear the churchyard from 9.30 to noon on Saturday April 9. Details from Malcolm Nelson 881778 or Alex Dodge 881487. Bring your own tools if you can.

The church spring clean



*Better watch it - I never carry that sort of money, do you?*

is at the same times on Saturday April 30. Call Sylvia Kennedy 882919.

After points made by Jeff Fletcher, the council is to contact Severn Trent to investigate unpleasant smell from the sewage works behind Cornfield Way, and will discuss in March the leaning wall at Bramble Bank.

Doreen Cope said residents were very anxious about rumours

that bus services through Ashton were to be cut.

The clerk is to seek more information. Meanwhile anyone concerned should contact Traveline on 0871 200 2223 or Wychavon 565000.

District councillor Adrian Darby said Wychavon faced cuts of £1.8m - less than expected - but over two years not four. Of this £1.1m was likely from efficiencies and staff cuts, with £0.5m from higher income, particularly in higher car parking charges.

Planning applications recently approved by Wychavon include:

- ◆ Land at The Groaten, store for wood sawing and machinery.
- ◆ Walnut Tree Cottage, Elmley Road, garage roof extension.
- ◆ To be decided: Field Cottage, Cheltenham Rd, rear building extension.

## Beware these door-to-door sharks

Trading standards officers have issued a warning about a door-to-door caller operating in the area offering to carry out gutter clearing and paving services.

Ashton Neighbourhood Watch spokesman Roger Umpelby said there had been an incident in the village.

The officials reminded residents to think twice before agreeing to any contracts for home maintenance services involving door-to-door callers. They should get three quotes from traders to consider if they are quoted a fair price.

Before they start work, door-to-door callers should provide their company name and address, or a proprietor's name and address if the business is not registered with Companies House. When a contract is agreed, traders should provide a

document detailing a seven-day cooling off period. If not, the trader will commit an offence and payment of that contract cannot be enforced.

Consumer protection laws have banned practices including a trader refusing to leave a property when specifically asked to do so, or returning to the property once asked to leave.

They also prohibit aggressive behaviour, such as pressuring householders into contracts or offering to take them to the bank to withdraw monies.

Worcestershire Trader Register is a free online directory of businesses who have given Trading Standards their commitment to provide a good service. See [www.traderregister.org.uk](http://www.traderregister.org.uk) or call 01905 765394.

## How Ashton flew its flag in the Antarctic

Ashton First School pupils have followed a six-week trek across the Antarctic step by step in an exciting polar exploration project.

Science teacher Tim Miall, a friend of Ashton head teacher Bryony Baynes, spent ten weeks previously working with her year 3 and 4 pupils, and others across the country as they learnt about polar geography.

Then Tim set off with the Fuchs Foundation in November, taking with him a flag bearing the handprints of every child in the school.

He sent and received daily blogs, telling about the terrain and the kit

required to survive in temperatures that sank to  $-38^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Pupils sampled the food needed to generate enough calories and took part in experiments to work out how penguins are adapted to the cold.

Tim's group skied from their Union Glacier base camp in a largely unexplored region, into the Nimbus hills, hauling sleds and setting up camp each night. He plans a return to Ashton to tell pupils more of his adventure.

"Science and geography are perceived as dull subjects and hard work. The Fuchs Foundation challenges this, aiming to revive the sense of excitement, adventure and thirst for knowledge," Tim said.

"I think it is safe to say we are the only school in the county with a flag that has flown in the Antarctic," Mrs Baynes said.



**80 degrees South, and 38 degrees below:** One of the camps from which Tim Miall kept Ashton pupils updated on his trek, and setting off, right, carrying their flag in his equipment.



In 'Lectric, a chapter in local author Fred Archer's book, *A Lad of Eve-sham Vale*, he describes villagers' reactions to this new form of light at that time they were still using candles and oil lamps. Some were suspicious whilst others were enthusiastic, especially those who saw the benefit of electricity on tap for their cumbersome accumulator-powered wireless sets.

The switch on took place in 1934, just over 76 years ago. Last year, like many other houses in the village, in September we were disconnected from the overhead supply and connected to what we all hope will be a much more reliable



## Another pole reveals its history

by John Dodge

underground version. So, on the appointed day I was out in front of the house watching the delicate cutting off of our wires from the pole in the garden of Stanley Farmhouse next door. The deed done, the 'monkey-man' shinned down

the pole, came across and said: "That's been there for 76 years - it's done well!" After I asked how he knew, he took me to look at the base of the pole. There about six feet from the ground was gouged into the wood the letters shown on

the drawing with the date 1934.

I have not been able to discover what exactly the letters stand for, although they must be the initials of what Fred called 'The Company'.

I did not have time to check how many of the poles were that old, and some of the wires were also said to be originals, but there cannot be many pieces of electrical apparatus which last as long.

However, now we can see why the present 'Company', *Central Networks*, agreed to spend so much in renewing our distribution system which had clearly served its time.

## Chance to trace those ancient Ashton roots

St. Barbara's Church will stage an exhibition about its 900 years of history as part of the Cotswold Churches Festival from 14-22 May.

On Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 it will allow access to information from its Church Registers from 1586-1950 and census returns from 1841-1911.

John Dodge has put them into a searchable computer database. Anyone may visit and, with John's help, use it to research their family history in Ashton.

Refreshments will be served throughout the weekend.

For further information about the festival see [www.cotswoldchurchesfestival.org](http://www.cotswoldchurchesfestival.org)



During the bitterly cold weather, villagers may have seen local church roofing specialist Tony Amphlett from Pershore, carrying out major repairs to the south side of the nave roof of St Barbara's.

This had been leaking in several places for quite a while, but a donation from Ashton Open Gardens helped to fund the work.

This involved replacing many of the Cotswold stone slates, as well as repairs to the roof timbers and lead flash-

## Roof repaired above nave

ing around the tower.

Hopefully further maintenance on this part of the roof should not be needed for several years.

During February, the tower lightning conductor will be improved to meet required standards. Use of the footpath through the churchyard should be unaffected while this work is carried out.

## Now these poor children can take a shower - thanks to you

Deprived children in South Africa will be able to shower instead of washing in a basin, thanks to donations from Ashton parishioners.

St. Barbara's Church raised a record total of nearly £1,850 for all charities during 2010.

The money went to many deserving causes including the appeal for Haiti, Save The Children Fund appeals for Chile, Pakistan and Niger, the Worcestershire Farmers Overseas Action Group, Concern Worldwide and The Children's Society.

On 22 December alone, £326 was collected at Ashton's Christmas celebration for the CATCH Project in Mzamomhle, South Africa – a charity supported by all churches in the Beckford Group.

The Project supports and trains vulnerable children and parents affected by poverty, violence and AIDS and provides a foster home for children in crisis.

The Rev. Margie Schutte, who helps coordinate support for the project, wrote: "To my dear friends in Ashton under Hill...I can't begin to tell you how much this [donation] will ease the lives of the children living under the cloud of HIV AIDS.

"Some of it will be used to install a shower for children who have been washing in a basin until now.

"It is hard to imagine people living in such difficult conditions when we are blessed with so much – so thank you for sharing your riches with the poor."

To learn more about the CATCH project, contact Alastair Humphrey on 881479 or see [www.catchproject.co.za](http://www.catchproject.co.za).

The churchwardens and committee of St Barbara's thanked all who contributed so generously to charity collections during 2010.

All recipients are listed on the church noticeboard and the village website.

## Christmas Fair raises £2,000 in just one day

The Christmas Fair held at The Old Farmhouse on 13 November raised a final total of £2,035, a record sum for the event.

St. Barbara's roof repair fund and the new Community Care Centre at St Richard's Hospice each received £812, and the sale of Christmas cards etc raised a further £411 for the hospice.

Organisers gave huge thanks to all who helped or contributed.

Children and parents will gather again at The Old Farmhouse on Saturday 2 April to make posies for the Mothering Sunday service at St. Barbara's on the following day.

## Calling all ladies who lunch (and men too)

The Lunch Club was started in 2003 when it was decided to hold it on the first Friday of the month at 12 noon at the Cricket Club Pavilion.

We are still running and offer a choice of three soups with a roll, three puddings and coffee or tea to finish. For this we charge £3 to cover costs. Any surplus has been given to charity.

Currently we have 22 volunteers. Each month six of them produce and serve the food. Some have specialties - Tony is known for his oxtail soup - but there is always choice to ensure there is something you like.

The club is open to all residents in Ashton and we also accommodate the occasional visitor. It helps us know how many to cater for if you sign in at the Post Office in the week before the Friday. If you forget or can't get there, don't worry as we can usually fit you in.

If you need transport please ring Doreen on 881656 and leave a message if there is no reply.

If you haven't tried us yet, do come and enjoy a sociable lunch and perhaps meet new friends.

### Ashton News

Running a business in Ashton? Tell us and we will try to publicise what you do. Contributions for the next issue to Colin Davison on 882364, or [colin.davison@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:colin.davison@hotmail.co.uk)

## Top duo sure to make 'em laugh



Former *That's Life* TV minstrel Grant Baynham and singer Hilary Spencer will present an evening of sparkling wit and music at Ashton Village Hall at 7.30 on **Saturday 5 March**.

With a wide repertoire including Victoria Wood, Flanders & Swann and Jake Thackray, and Grant's original songs, the duo are winning plaudits on radio and at clubs and theatres.

Grant was the dextrous

guitarist on Esther Rantzen's show for four years. Hilary, a classical soprano is now more performs Noel Coward or Jerome Kern.

TV producer and presenter Ned Sherrin called their act "comic song touched with gold."

Judge for yourself at what promises to be a great cabaret night.

Tickets cost £8 each and are available from Penny Scotland on 881594.

## So how well do you think you know your partner?

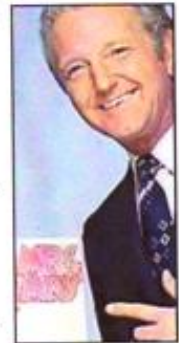
Ashton presents its own version of Derek Batey's popular TV show *Mr & Mrs* next month.

The evening, **Saturday 12 February**, is in aid of the First School. It starts at 7.30pm with drinks and includes a 3-course meal and quiz.

Couples will don headphones and answer questions about each other, and later all will try to predict answers by their partners.

For tickets, just £15 each, see Claire Kirk at Plough Cottage, Rachel Evans-Cook or Lucy Griffiths at the school, or email [claire.vincent@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:claire.vincent@hotmail.co.uk)

Singles and couples are welcome.



## Exciting new season for Parish Music

Parish Music concerts resume at 8pm on **Saturday April 2** with a concert of wind music in Beckford church by the Canteloube Trio - Jennie-Lee Keetley, oboe, Richard Russell, clarinet, and Stuart Russell, bassoon. Admission on the door costs £10.

The group was formed in 2003 with the aim of exploring the repertoire for woodwind trio, and is particularly interested in new music.

Its members are graduates of the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music, who combine careers in chamber and orchestral playing with work in music education and outreach.

Their concert will include works by



Henri Tomasi, Mozart, Sándor Veress, Richard Walthew, Beethoven, Gordon Jacob and Jean Françaix.

Recent highlights for the trio included a successful tour to Scotland in early 2009. Prior to this, engagements in the south of England earned the group critical acclaim.

The Canteloube Trio also won a scholarship place on a Tunnell Trust chamber music course in Strathgarry, where they gave several concert performances.

Further Parish Music concerts include the Cotswold Flute and Harp Duo in Teddington on Saturday April 30, and the Lendvai String Trio in Overbury on Saturday 28 May.