



Late bid for homes by school

Parish councillors have demanded more details before deciding whether to support plans for a yet unspecified number of houses on a site opposite the Middle School.

The land, owned by David Eaton, of Ballard Farm, Hinton on the Green, runs for 62 metres along Elmley Road and back up to 120 metres behind White Hart Villa, Willow End and Ashbee.

Any decision would be made by Wychavon, but Kathleen Else, of Birmingham planning consultants RPS, told the parish council that she wanted their views before commissioning plans.

Only one potential site, for six

No numbers known, so tell us more, say parish councillors

houses on The Groaten, had been identified in the village plan, she said, and analysis had suggested more would be needed, especially affordable housing. A large estate was not intended.

“This is a bottom-up approach. What other things are required? There is no point in doing a layout with luxury houses if you say you need bungalows.

“This could only go forward through the support of the parish council.”

Ms Else said any development would include a lay-by for cars or turning area for buses to ease congestion at the school

Mr Eaton told the meeting: “Getting through the village can be a nightmare. I wondered if we can take vehicles off the road, but we need development to pay for it.”

The RPS presentation, heard also by seven members of the public, was made just ten days before the deadline for council views on the local development plan.

From the public, David Hunter said it

was “deeply implausible” that the potential developer had no idea about the density or number of homes.

County Cllr. Adrian Hardman said, “To suggest that a housing development is going to solve a parking problem is a farce.”

District Cllr. Adrian Darby said rural sites for affordable housing could still be considered after the deadline.

The council agreed that it could hold a special meeting to discuss the proposal if more detailed plans were presented.

Roger Umpelby, chairman of the school governors, said later, “There is a problem with parking, but there is no way we would get involved in support or otherwise of a planning application.”

Ashton’s ash avenue revealed

A millennium vision for Ashton is starting to emerge with the development of an avenue of ash trees marking the approach to the village. The trees can now be seen standing proudly along 400 yards of The Groaten following the cutting of the surrounding replanted hedge.

The avenue was one of the ideas chosen in a ballot of villagers on ways to mark the year 2000.

The largest project was the provision of a new children’s play area, but in the village also won grants worth £6,750 for the trees. Ash was chosen for the specimens because of its local links. The name Ashton comes from the



Right approach: Jeff Fletcher with the avenue of ash trees.

old English *aescum* (ash). Landowner Richard Hughes gave permission for the old hedge to be removed, which was replaced with native species of hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, hazel and buckthorn. A

couple of surviving laburnum were retained. Millennium committee chairman Julian Alington said many people had worked hard to improve the approach to the village.

All seems well, then up pops Charlock



Farm life
by Charles Archer

This year has been very dry but we have missed out on prolonged periods of sunshine. I also cannot remember a year with so many windy days, particularly in May and June.

Gloomy yield forecasts for crops were proved wrong at harvest time. Yields of wheat, oilseed rape and linseed were very pleasing, harvesting conditions favourable and prices buoyant.

There is a downside to the warmer weather. You have probably noticed the blaze of yellow showing in the newly sown oilseed rape fields and may have thought that the rape was already in flower.

This is Charlock, a weed whose seeds live in the soil for many decades and this year's conditions encouraged its germination. Unfortunately it is resistant to herbicides.

Hay and silage yields were low, so livestock have been fed on supplementary hay and straw since late July. Soon most of them will be in their winter quarters.

We have had just enough rain to keep the hill from becoming too brown. October's rain has been most welcome, but we need several inches over the winter months.

Helpers wanted to work with pupils

Ashton First School is urgently seeking volunteers to help in classes, particularly listening to children read, and working with small groups of Early Years pupils.

"We are a very welcoming school so anyone who volunteered would be greeted with open arms, plus lots of tea/coffee and biscuits," said head teacher Bryony Baynes.

"Anyone interested could pop into school to see me or could call the school office, 881333."

No experience was required, and there were few restrictions on age, mobility, or background.

"As much as possible, we like our children to work in small groups with adult supervision. This is especially important in our Reception and Year 1 class where the children are still learning so many skills," she said.



"It makes a huge difference to the children's learning if we have adult helpers in the class at this crucial stage in their learning."

The work can be as varied as the helper wants, such as listening to readers, working on numeracy games or helping with cooking or sewing.

"Our children are absolutely lovely – very refreshing in their outlook and great fun to be around so it would really lift people's spirits to get involved."

"Also, it doesn't necessarily have to be older people; we would equally welcome 6th formers who have an afternoon spare.

Jobs for volunteers

Fund-raisers, a cub scout leader, mentors to women needing support or a sympathetic ear, even jobs abroad – these are some of the volunteering opportunities available near Ashton.

In Evesham, POPI – a project that promotes older people's independence - is looking for visitors or helpers who can simply provide a friendly voice on the telephone. For details, call Evesham Volunteer Centre, 40165.

More opportunities tend to

be advertised through Pershore Volunteer Centre, and it's best to check the website www.do-it.org for information, or to call 554299.

The latest openings there include those mentioned above. Another is to join conservation volunteers who meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to travel to nature reserves for tasks such as heathland restoration and protecting adders. No experience in snake-charming or accountancy is needed.

£200 prize can be claimed by Good Citizen

A £200 award could be awaiting a good citizen of Ashton.

No-one from the village applied this year for the Wychavon Bursary, set up in 1993 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession.

The award was launched by the district council and nearly 30 of its parishes.

The annual bursary goes to the person or group who, in others' opinion, has given best service to the community, hopefully to help them continue their good work.

Contact parish council clerk Jane Hopkins, 881497 for details.

Ashes to Ashton

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Roger Umpelby, who took over the tree project, said the old hedge had not given a good impression of the village.

"Now it's trimmed, it's coming on as it should.

Ten years is a short time for ash, that can live 200 years," he said.

This summer Jeff Fletcher persuaded the parish council to spend nearly £1,000 to trim the hedge, to allow the trees to flourish, and to cut down a willow that was given away as logs.

"When you approach somewhere past lovely trees, as you do in France, it enhances your impression," he said.

"Ashton is a very pretty village, and we have to work hard to look after it."

Mr Hughes said he had been happy to liaise over details of the project.

Was it a plane? Was it a UFO?

No, Mavis was right. It was a Zeppelin – and she was right about the frogs too

A senior Ashton resident has recalled extraordinary sights seen over the village – the huge Graf Zeppelin airship, and the Northern Lights.

And if that was not unusual enough, she recalls the day it rained frogs.

Mavis Davis, 86, who has lived in Ashton all her life, says no-one ever believed her story of the falling amphibians – but research has backed up all her amazing recollections.

Mrs Davis read in the *Gloucestershire Echo* about the strange sightings in other villages over the years, and contributed her own memories. Later she told *Ashton News* more.

“I remember seeing the Northern Lights very clearly when I was about 11 years old,” she said.

Then in the 1930s she was with an aunt in Elmley Road when she saw the huge shape of an airship.

“It passed overhead from the hill behind straight towards Broadway Tower,” she said. “My husband Syd was living at Kersoe at the time and he saw it too.”



Spot the ball? The Graf Zeppelin over Wembley during the 1930 Cup Final.

“My aunt had lived through the First World War, so she was a bit frightened, and we heard later it was the Graf Zeppelin.”

She also remembered the regular flights of the Royal Mail aircraft at about the same time each night, but her strangest memory came when she was riding on her bicycle past Rockland House.

“There had been a thunderstorm and the ground was very wet. And all across the road were medium-

sized frogs and I didn’t dare look up.

“I was just nine or ten, and pretty scared. I didn’t like frogs anyway, and I couldn’t put my feet down between them, or move forward. How I got away I don’t remember.

“No-one ever believed me. Someone said they must have come up from a stream, but I thought they had come down with the rain.”

But a little research might have convinced the sceptics. The Graf Zeppelin flew over the Cup Final at Wembley in 1930 and on 18 August 1931 made the first of three round-Britain publicity tours. It was scrapped in 1940 after the crash of the Hindenburg airship in America.

Events this year have added credence to Mavis’ other memories. In February, solar flares caused ‘Northern Lights’ to appear in the sky over England.

And this month, incidents of raining fish and frogs were reported across the world. Weathermen said that during thunderstorms strong winds can pick up sea or lake water and drop it far away, including any creatures living in it.

Times to call 101 not 999

Anyone reporting crime should now call 101, not 999, except for emergencies.

Chief Supt Trevor Albutt of West Mercia said the new number applied to incidents such as stolen cars, property damage, suspected drug crime and minor traffic accidents.

“Every day we receive inappropriate calls on 999 which stop or delay people with real emergencies getting through,” he said.

“We hope that adopting 101 will al-

low us to better prioritise the most urgent calls for help.”

West Mercia is one of 43 police forces to adopt 101, which costs 15p for any duration of call.

0300 333 3000 will continue as a switchboard number to speak to a particular member of the local policing team.

Anyone with crime concerns or wanting to be alerted to local issues can ring Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator Roger Umpelby 881458.

Owners seek to lift restriction on who can buy homes

Owners of two properties on Back Lane are seeking to lift long-standing restrictions that they can be sold only to buyers connected with agriculture.

The orders have been in force on Rails End nursery since its construction in 1963, and on the bungalow Harvest Fields since 1979. Both have recently been put up for sale.

An application by Sally Skinner says that as a small nurseryman she is being virtually priced out of markets.

She has had interest from potential buyers of the nursery, but none has come to fruition, and she argues that a solution would be to sell the greenhouses for removal, and the house as a private dwelling.

Agents acting for David Nicklin, who runs Cotswold Drainage, say he has found a buyer for his bungalow and is anxious to have the restriction removed quickly. He has lived there ten years and has not earned his living from agriculture or horticulture, they point out.

Claire Kirke has applied to Wy-chavon for permission to replace iron railings at Plough Cottage, Elmley Road, with a Cotswold stone wall and replace a broken gate.

The parish council has raised no objections to any of the applications.

The district council has approved plans for repairs and roof alterations at Rookery Nook, Beckford Road.

Notice of thanks

Janet (Jan) Saffron died of cancer at home in Ashton on 19 June. Her family, Leonard, Richard and Ruth wish to thank neighbours and friends for their tremendous help and support, both to Jan and to us.

We are also grateful to the district nurses and other health workers for the wonderful care they gave to Jan.

Major donation will speed village hall improvement

Hopes of renovating the Village Hall kitchen have been boosted by a £5,000 donation from the parish council. This will be in addition to the £2,000 that it annually gives to the Recreation Centre.

The council was told that the overall cost was likely to be around £8,000, but Doreen Cope said it was getting more difficult to raise money.

With no other major project planned next year, the council unanimously supported a proposal by Jeff Fletcher and Gerry Barnett for a "substantial" donation to get the job done.

Recreation centre chairman Brian Stephens welcomed the "excellent news."

"We are probably going to apply for an Awards for All grant to do as good a job as possible rather than something that is cheap and cheerful," he said.

A commercial dishwasher is likely to

Parish precept will rise to pay for it

cost £1,800 and a range cooker £1,000.

"People have looked at the hall for private functions but decided the facilities were not up to scratch and gone to Elmley village hall or elsewhere," he said.

"I'm sure we will attract more users, and it will be of benefit to people like the school PFA and organisations like the guides."

The council decided also to give £1,500 to St. Barbara's toward maintenance costs.

The parish precept fell last year from £10,000 to £7,000, but largely as a result of the help to the village hall, it is set to double to £14,000 in 2012.

The sum will amount to less than 3% of local council tax charges, and could mean an extra £20-£30 on individual bills.

Damage leads to £200 bill

The Recreation Centre faces a £200 bill after vandals – or possibly a careless driver – knocked down bollards protecting the playing field.

The barriers were erected to prevent vehicles being parked on the field at night after complaints that young people were playing loud music on car radios.

Chairman Brian Stephens said it was a mystery how the damage had been done, as it would have taken a sledgehammer to smash the metal retention plates. If a car had hit them, it would have suffered considerable damage.

The setback came as the organisation welcomed completion of work to improve the area around the tennis courts, where weeds have been cleared and a gravel patch laid to the arboretum.

Two benches donated by Russ Cook have been sited overlooking the court.

The centre is to spend nearly £2,000 to relay bark on the playground. The job will require the equivalent of nearly 200 80-litre bags.

Meanwhile, funds from the wound-up tennis club have been given to the Centre which will now look after the courts. Anyone interested in restarting the club should get in touch with Mr Stephens on 881467 or any other committee member.

Elsewhere, the centre will ask the first school to discourage parents from parking on grass outside the green room.

The planned Fun Run in October was cancelled because fewer than 12 entrants had registered.

Action at last on village footways

Seven years of complaints about a footway through Ashton have succeeded at last, and there could be more good news to come.

Work started this week to restore the path from Old Manor Farm to Willow Close, with a raised level over the roots of the huge Wellingtonia tree.

Cllr Adrian Hardman said the issue had first been raised in 1994, but action followed swiftly after a site meeting in October.

He also raised hopes that the pavements throughout Cornfield Way might be renovated next year during a round of county council schemes.

"The footways there are starting to wear out after 40 years, and we should target our lobbying to get the whole estate done in one fell swoop," he said.

He promised also to look at the possibility of making a parking area on the south side of Elmley Road before Cornfield Way by using grassed paving.

The parish council will soon fill the new grit bin nearby, ready for the winter.



The long view: Could wind or geothermal energy help Ashton's carbon footprint? Silhouette picture on Bredon Hill by Roger Umpelby.

Residents invited to cut fuel bills and go green

Ashton residents are being invited to join an ambitious plan to save energy costs and potentially help the village go green.

The scheme, devised by new parish councillor Frank Moore, has two phases – to negotiate immediate bulk deals on fuel, and in the longer term to investigate options for renewable energy.

He told the parish council that such schemes were becoming more widespread in the West Midlands and Oxfordshire. Wychavon has also organised meetings with Calor and oil suppliers.

"We could form bulk buying groups and negotiate the best deals for oil, gas, electricity and even wood," he said.

"Savings based on minimum deliveries can be significant. The buying group will need a charter, stringent rules and volunteers."

Cllr Moore said longer-term aims might include solar energy and geothermal schemes using boreholes and heat exchangers.

The project "could potentially make real savings for virtually every household," he said. "In ten or 15 years we could have a scheme to serve 50% or more of the properties."

Anyone interested in joining the initial plan should contact the parish council clerk, Jane Hopkins, 881497

Dutch duo defy the wet, wet, wet

The promoter of Ashton Family Music Festival said the event had been a great success despite bad weather, attracting about 250 visitors, some in fancy dress (right).

A heavy, late downpour forced bands to relocate from the main stage, before Stef and Hans from Holland restarted the programme with an amazing collection of acoustic covers. The event covered its high running costs and raised just over £50 for the Air Ambulance.

Graham Begley of Evesham said he



might merge the event with one in Tewkesbury if a suitable venue could be found.

Top jockey backs Ashton race night

They're under starter's orders for Ashton Cricket Club's popular Race Night in the Village Hall from 7.30pm on Saturday 19 November.

Punters can bet on eight video races, including one sponsored by jockey Paddy Brennan, who won the 2010 Cheltenham Gold Cup on Imperial Commander. The first runners will be out of the starting gate at 8pm.

Tickets cost just £4, and include a race card and ploughman's supper. They are available from Doreen Cope 881656 or on the door.

A bar will help to



keep throats lubricated amid the excitement.

It's a fun night, and an important one for club funds. July's successful event raised £250 for St. Richard's Hospice.

Choir returns

Cotswold Male Voice Choir return to Beckford for a concert in the church at 7pm on Saturday 26 November. Tickets cost £10 from Beckford Stores, or from Paul and Christine on 881990.

Village clean-up

Ashton's annual litter pick will take place on Saturday 4 February.



Kitchen sink comedy

Shindig returns to Ashton Village Hall at 8pm on Friday 13 January with *Ten Days that shook the Kitchen*, a funny one-woman show that sold out at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Ginny Davis performs a comic, bitter-sweet monologue detailing ten days in the life of Ruth Rich, a middle-aged, middle-class misfit modern mum.

With an embarrassing, flatulent husband and three whingeing kids, Ruth's days are filled with activities immediately familiar to mothers everywhere: swimming lessons, run-ins with the school secretary, critical in-laws, and an unforgettable visit to a public loo.

The bane of Ruth's life is her 34DD-cupped friend, Timmy's mum. Ruth's role is to make Timmy's mum feel better about herself. Timmy's mum's is to make Ruth feel worse.

Things look up when Ruth prangs the car into dangerously good-looking Millie's dad's BMW. Then they meet again at a PTA event. Will her honour/marriage survive?

Edinburgh *Fest* magazine praised the show's "dry wit, perceptive observations and refreshing originality."

The show is suitable for 8yrs and upwards. Tickets cost £9 from 881594, 882661 or the Post Office. Bring your own drinks and glasses.

Picnic planned for Jubilee

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee is likely to be marked in Ashton with a picnic in the playing fields on Sunday 3 June 2012.

Graham Begley, promoter of the recent Ashton Family Music Festival, may provide music, and the Recreation Centre hopes to involve also First School parents and friends.

Centre chairman Brian Stephens said: "We can target the older generation and we need to reach younger people too."

The Spring Bank Holiday will move to Monday 4 June, followed by a special holiday on Tuesday 5th to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession.

A good way to find early Christmas gifts

The Christmas Fair from 2 to 4.30 on Saturday 19 November at The Old Farmhouse, Elmley Road, offers an ideal opportunity to buy Christmas cards, calendars, diaries, handi-crafts, cakes and preserves.

There will be "as new" gifts on bring and buy stalls, with a surprise present tree, plants and produce, prize draws and seasonal refreshments.

Contributions for the stalls and raffle will be most welcome and can be delivered to The Old Farmhouse. Please contact Alex and John Dodge at The Old Farmhouse, 881487.

Admission costs £2 and includes refreshments; children come free. All proceeds will be shared between St Richard's Hospice and St Barbara's Church Fabric Fund.

Beckford Christmas market will be held at 2pm on Saturday 3 December, including cakes, toys, books and bric-a-brac. Advance donations to the village hall on the Friday, or call 881373 for details.

Candlelit supper

The Avon Singers will perform another of their popular cabaret evenings on Saturday 31 March in the Village Hall.

For tickets for the candlelit supper with entertainment by some of our best-known local songsters, call Joe Aspey on 858009.

Christmas services at St. Barbara's

Christmas activities at St. Barbara's begin at 2pm on Saturday 3 December with Christingle-making at The Old Farmhouse. All are welcome; tea and cake are provided.

Further dates include:

Sun 4th: Christingle Service, 3.30pm

Sun 11th: Holy Communion, 9.30am

Wed 14th: Celebration of Christmas, 6.30pm, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Collection for local charity *Caring Hands in the Vale*.

Sun 18th: Family Service with a Nativity theme, 11.00am. Young readers and musicians are wanted to take part. Contact Alex 881487 or Malcolm 881778.

Sat, Christmas Eve crib service, 3.30pm. The travelling Nativity, Posada, returns to St. Barbara's. If you wish to receive it into your home during Advent, please inform Alex.

Christmas Day: Family communion, 9.30am.

Sun 1 January: 11am, New year readings and hymns. Call Malcolm or Alex to suggest favourites.

Calling all rockers

Bev Pegg and his rock 'n' roll band appear at Elmley Castle Village Hall at 7.15pm on Saturday 3 December for a Christmas party, buffet and bar. Tickets from Brian Lovett, 710286 or briand-lovett@btinternet.com.



Awards for PM stars

The first performers in next year's Parish Music season have just returned from Spain after winning two awards in an international choral competition.

The Songmen (pictured above), the exciting a cappella group from Tewkesbury, took sacred and profane category prizes at the Tolosa festival with their programme of music from the 16th to 21st centuries.

Their programme, *Sacred, soul 'n' swing*, can be heard at Overbury on 3 March.

On 24 March, Polish violinist Magdalena Filipczak and pianist Viktor Bijelović perform short works by Prokofiev, Wieniawski and Britten, and the César Franck violin sonata at Bredon.

This will be Parish Music's 17th season, providing concerts of classical music in local country churches.

All concerts start at 8pm on Saturday evenings and end with an opportunity to meet the performers over a glass of wine or fruit juice. Tickets cost £10; students free.

The series allows up-and-coming musicians to perform in delightful surroundings. Many artists have gone on to establish distinguished careers.

Full concert details are published the Ashton website and in a brochure. To receive a copy by post or by email, contact Alastair or Gill Humphrey 881479 or Julian Alington 882060.

Help add spice to school bid for outdoor classroom



It's not just the competition that will be hot at the Village Hall at 8pm next Saturday, 26 November.

For the teams of six entering the quiz night in aid of the First School will be sustained by a two-course meal including chilli. (An alternative is available.)

Tickets are £10 per person. Book in advance if possible, at the school or with Claire Kirke, 881133, or 07715 698 999, or at claire.vincent@hotmail.co.uk.

All proceeds will go toward providing the outside classroom pictured below, so any gifts such as cakes, jams, wine or meal offers for a raffle will be gratefully received.

Contestants can enter as a team or find partners on the night. They can bring their own wine or buy from a bar.



Ashton News

Please keep this copy of Ashton News as a reminder of the many events in the area, or note them in your diary.

The next issue will not be produced until late February. Send contributions to colin.davison@hotmail.co.uk or call 882364.

WI President applauded for nine years untiring work

After nine years as President, Christine Powell has resigned her position at the annual meeting.

She was warmly thanked by everyone. They appreciated her long service - always efficient, cheerful and supportive in so many ways such as driving members to functions, hosting meetings at her home, and being on hand despite a busy working and family life.

She was presented with flowers and gift tokens for two well earned relaxing massages.

Two other members were thanked - Mrs. Rosemary Hammond who stepped down as Treasurer and Mrs. Moira Pearce.

Mrs. Marjorie Facer was elected the new President and will carry forward the very active and successful WI.

Secretary Dianne Stephens reported our

Recipe gift idea

The new Ashton WI recipe book, *A Taste of Ashton through the Seasons*, will be available before Christmas. At only £5, it would make a lovely Christmas gift.

70th year had been very active. It included speakers covering subjects, from the life and music of Elgar to the history and renovation of the Regal Cinema.

Outings included visits to the Royal Shakespeare Company, Painswick Rococo gardens, Jinney Ring Craft Centre, a Buddhist Temple and Greek Orthodox Church, skittles and the monthly local walk

which will continue during the winter.

The programme for 2012/13 is soon to be printed and should provide a full and interesting year with outings and talks to please all tastes.

New members or visitors are always welcome at our meetings on the first Tuesday of each month.

Look out for the posters giving information for each meeting, or contact Jen Creese 881266 or Diane Stephens 881467.

High costs and bad weather put paid to village fete

Ashton fete is unlikely to be held in 2012 unless new voluntary organisers come forward, the Recreation Centre committee has decided.

But the produce show in the Village Hall will go ahead, probably in September, followed by a barn dance.

The biennial fete involved a prodigious amount of work, and the cost of hiring a marquee was almost prohibitive, said Centre chairman Brian Stephens.

In 2008 it had to be moved indoors due to bad weather, but the produce show was unaffected.

It was not practical to have the events at separate locations, Mr Stephens said.

The show, featuring fruit, vegetables, flowers, cakes and preserves had always been well supported, and organisers could now concentrate on developing its success.

Council to probe tree preservation

The parish council is to ask why a preservation order has been put onto a willow tree at Bredon Holt, Elmley Road.

Members were told that they had no right to be consulted about the decision, by Wychavon, and were concerned lest the tree was causing structural damage to a neighbouring property.

Dig out those Royal memories

The 2012 Open Gardens from 1 to 6pm on the weekend of 9 and 10 June will mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and include a celebratory exhibition in St. Barbara's.

John Dodge would love to hear from anyone with pictures, memorabilia or memories of Ashton events from the 2002 Golden Jubilee, 1977 Silver Jubilee - or earlier royal events.

It is hoped to have 20 gardens open. If you haven't opened before but might like to do so please contact John on 881487.

Your garden doesn't need to be perfectly neat and tidy. Visitors say they easily identify with work in progress.

Each year Ashton Open Gardens aims to raise funds for our community. Despite the bad weather on the Sunday of this year's event, it gave money to the garden club and young musicians at the middle school, to the



Peonies: Resplendent during the 2010 Open Gardens.

Guides and WI.

It also helped fund repairs at St Barbara's, where a pinnacle was in danger of collapse, and refurbishment and repairs at the Village Hall.

It's the Dave Hunting Show

Batsman tops 1,000 runs to dominate awards night

ASHTON Cricket Club's end-of-season annual awards dinner at the Star Inn became something of the Dave Hunting Show, such was his collection of individual awards.

Hunting (pictured) had a remarkable season with the bat, scoring 1,066 runs in all games at an average of 42.64. He scored 11 half-centuries, a club record, and was only the sixth Ashton batsman ever to pass 1,000 runs in a season.

As well as winning the trophy for the second XI player of the year and the club batting award, Hunting was voted the Sunday player of the year, the fantasy league player of the year and the top six-hitter.

The previous evening he had received the Cotswold Hills League (CHL) award for the leading run-scorer in division six.

First XI captain Will Archer described the season as a "challenging" time in the premier division of the CHL which eventually saw Ashton relegated into division one, despite a very good start to the season.

"Although we got relegated, I'm not too downhearted and there's no reason why we can't have a good season next year," he said.



Archer himself received the first team player of the year award and the club bowling award while Jonny Cooper, who was the first team's leading run-scorer with 351 league runs, was awarded the Captain's Cup.

Club chairman Guy Garland, who is also the second team skipper, described it as "the season which could have been" after the seconds failed to gain promotion from division six, losing several key games and eventually finishing fourth.

But he praised the great spirit in the team and in the club as a whole.

The chairman was also among the awards, winning the CHL division six prize for the leading wicket-taker.

Jack Perks and Mike Harris received the two junior awards, while junior co-ordinator Dave Whitehouse was voted Clubman of the Year, not for the first time.

Hail the great chieftain o' the puddin-race

The piper is booked, the haggis is on order.

So there will be sangs and prattle, and a wee dram too at the Burns Night in the Village Hall, at 7.30pm on Saturday 4 February.

Tickets are available at £15 from the Post Office or on 881594 or 881266. Profits from the event will go to the fund for the hall's kitchen refurbishment.

Star Inn shops local for Christmas menu

The Star Inn is offering a special menu throughout December until Christmas Eve featuring many locally sourced ingredients.

Prices are £13.95 for 2-course and £16.95 for 3-course lunches, or £19.95 for a 3-course dinner including coffee. Reductions of 10% are available for parties of 10+.

Starters: Pâté; smoked mackerel pâté; garlic mushrooms in a creamy garlic and herb sauce; winter vegetable soup.

Mains: Worcs turkey; loin of Grafton pork glazed with Tewkesbury mustard, apple and cider sauce; pan-seared salmon with hollandaise sauce; mushroom, brie and redcurrant filo Wellington.

Desserts: Christmas pudding with brandy sauce; apple and blackberry pie; tiramisu; local cheese and biscuits; Champagne sorbet.

For bookings call 881325, email thepub@thestar-ashtonunderhill.co.uk, or see its website. A 50% deposit may be required.



Under-cover act: The show goes on. One of the bands defy the weather at the first Ashton Family Music Festival