

COMMUNITY CALL

Edition 2006/01

Newsletter

Spring 2006

Newsletter - Third Issue

Welcome to this third issue of the new Community Call. I hope you will find something of interest in it this time.

I hope to start a letters section next time so if you have an opinion or comment you want aired, write to me.

You can now advertise - see Ads. page for details - and we always need contributions of interest to villagers, so please contact myself, or any member of the committee, if you feel you have something to share.

David Harmer - Editor

*Email - davedharmer@aol.com
phone 01442-874931*

Future Village Events

- **St George's Day - Rounders on the Green**
Sunday 23rd April. 2.30-5.00pm
- **Village Summer Fair - on the Green**
Saturday 10th June. 2.30pm
- **AGM - Old School**
Tuesday 13th June. 7.30pm

Please support these events. They are great fun and a useful source of funds.

(Watch out for details on Posters and Flyers, or call/mail for information)

For Meetings and parties try the

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The Chairman writes

As I sit here, writing for Community Call, snow is falling heavily outside. Snow doesn't often fall in Ashley Green in great quantities any more, but I bet there are those of you who remember when it did, and as if it were only yesterday. How things change!!

I have been browsing through old editions of Community Call from 1989 to 1996, which was before I lived in the village, and again I echo the sentiment - How things change!

This is my **final** year as Chairman of the Community Association, and in the last three years I have tried to continue the good work of the previous chairmen and women, whilst bringing in new ideas, enthusiasm and making progress. I have tended to concentrate on the Village Hall and its refurbishment, and the events and activities held there.

The final pieces of that refurbishment are now underway; new curtains for the windows and stage are to be ordered imminently and the planning of the refurbishment of the kitchen is well advanced.

Once completed, we will have a modern commercial standard kitchen able to cater for the functions now being held at the Hall - some change indeed.

The Events Committee have organised some fantastic evenings there. In the last four months alone we have had the Valentines Dinner & Dance, the Caribbean evening and the Barn dance and you can read about these events inside. In addition there was Bonfire night - at least 600 people turned up to that and the Quiz night with around 100 attending.

At each event I see and meet new people - at the Valentine's evening a "captains table" was formed solely for couples who were new and/or not part of a large group - they had a ball, and I hope they definitely felt welcome and already a part of the village.

I look forward to seeing lots of these new faces at the Annual General Meeting of The Community Association which is being held on 13th June. **Please mark in your diaries now!!** At that meeting a new chairperson will be appointed and each year all of the honorary officers have to be elected, and a new Executive Committee and General Council formed.

Every year we ask that 'new blood' comes along and gets involved - and remember, the minimum commitment is a mere one meeting per quarter.

A topic at the forefront of village gossip at the moment is the subject of the rush hour congestion at the Church crossroads and the suggestion of adopting a one-way system around the Church.

In the Winter edition of Community Call 1993, there were issues voiced about traffic flows resulting from the (then) proposed new A41 bypass. A Village Traffic Committee was formed then. Maybe we need to reform that? Some extracts from that edition are included later.

The Community Association is in extremely good health, and I am sure that in the years ahead, it will continue to grow and contribute in no small part to the quality of Village life.

Who knows, we may see the return of some of the Village Institutions which I saw mentioned in those old editions of Community Call such as the Eagles Football Club, the Ballet School, the Annual Treasure Hunt, the Fun Run, the Music Hall, the Flower Arrangers or the Senior Citizens Lunch Club.

It would take a little longer though and only with a substantial effort by some devotee to resurrect "The Apple Store Farm Shop" which thrived all those years ago.

(continued on next page)

(The Chairman writes - cont'd)

I would like to send a very warm welcome to all new residents in the village. You will find that Ashley Green is a wonderful place to live with a great community spirit.

Finally my heartfelt thanks to all of you on the Committees of the Association who have contributed so much over the last three years - you have achieved fantastic results - thank you all.

Mark Broschomb - Chairman

Ashley Green **Village Fair - June 10th**

Can **YOU** help?

We are already planning for the Ashley Green Village Fair and **we need support from more people.**

Live music - can anyone provide this or has anyone a connection with a band who could? **Classic car show** - possible if someone could organise this? **Ponies** - we need more ponies for pony rides. An adult needed to organise a **Fancy dress competition** with a Royal theme to celebrate the Queen's 80th birthday, and lots of children, of course. We also need organisers for our traditional **Tug-of-war, Raffle** and **Fun dog show** (and lots of dogs). Keep a look out for posters and flyers!

If you can help in any way please call **Mary Axon** on **01442 866549**.

So What Exactly is the **"Ashley Green and** **District Community** **Association"**?

It is a registered charity made up of members who live in the village and/or are involved in village life.

The objectives of the Association are to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Ashley Green and the neighbourhood by associating together the people of the village, the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants of the village.

It also has the particular remit to maintain and improve the Old School and the Village Hall for the benefit of all the villagers. Beyond managing the two buildings, the primary 'public' face of the AGDCA activities are the many village events run throughout the year - the Village Fair, Bonfire Night, Quiz Night, the Barn Dance, Valentines Night, the Youth Club Race Night, the Theatre in the Villages Play, the Christmas Party and so on.

However it also tries to achieve its more loftier objectives by helping to represent the community in terms of interaction with the Parish Council, Chiltern District Council and the County Council, by working with other village institutions such as the Church and the Pub. It supports and encourages village organisations and the introduction of other activities, clubs and groups for the village and by providing a focus for fund raising events to benefit any other aspect of village life. If you would like to help maintain a vibrant village life you can do so in two ways:

Firstly, become a member of the Association. At the very least your membership gives you reductions on booking rates if you ever want to hire the Old School or the Village Hall. You will also receive regular updates on village events and feel that you are contributing to maintaining the village facilities.

Secondly, become an active member of village life by joining the AGDCA General Committee. This meets only 4 times a year for a couple of hours often followed by a visit to one of the other primary village institutions, the Golden Eagle. That's a mere 0.01% of your time and will allow you to influence the shape of current and future village life. Even if you do not want to be on the General Committee, we are always keen to have people help with the events that we organise and support. You could even just attend the AGM on 13th June.

For more details please contact:-
Roger Macklin - 01442 876965

Not a Member?

Join now and take a more active part in your village. Annual fee £5.00 per person - Family rates too!

Contact Membership Secretary 01442-876965

OPINION

Traffic in Ashley Green

Our chairman touched on one pressing issue of the day which is the traffic in our village. He mentioned that in 1993 a Village Traffic Committee was formed to deal with the big problem then - the A41 Berkhamsted bypass.

Today, however, it appears on the surface that nothing is being done to address the ever increasing traffic flows, the use of Two Dells lane and Hog Lane as "Rat Runs" and the difficulty and danger at their junction with the Chesham Road - but this is not true.

Bucks CC have been monitoring the situation for a number of years and looked at possible solutions, and keeping the Parish Council informed.

At Christmas the Parish Council proposed a form of one-way system round the church, but those villagers who were fortunate to get sight of that quickly made their views known, and it now seems that proposal is not being pursued with the Bucks County planners.

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, there will have been a meeting where Parish Councillors, Bucks CC representatives and some villagers will have discussed options and issues.

I earnestly hope that the Parish Council will be able to share the findings with the village as soon as they can.

Call your Parish Councillor if you are concerned!! **ED.**

EVENTS ROUNDUP - Reports from some events since the Autumn Newsletter.

THE GREEN GOES CARIBBEAN.



It is quite remarkable the way in which on a dark, wet Autumnal evening in 2005, the Ashley Green village hall can transport you away to the Caribbean - but the events committee did it again last October when the Caribbean evening proved another resounding success.

The hall was beautifully decorated with visions of sun-drenched beaches and palm trees, gentle lapping waves and sailing boats chasing each other around the room.

It resounded to the inimitable sound of the steel band, playing Caribbean and Latin favourites and there was a great meal based upon a Caribbean recipe for a chicken casserole and rice - a host of cooks proving that you can't have too many of them after all!

Dress, it must be said exhibited great variety. As the dancing got going and the hall became a joyous place with lots of variable and, at times, unique styles who cared how we looked!

It may have been raining outside, but inside there was only sunshine and laughter.

What a great success!! All the committee and helpers must get the highest marks for a great effort.



The Barn Dance was staged on January 21st and was enjoyed by everyone with ages ranging from 1 to *well* over 21. There were lots of children and it was so nice to see them dancing all the dances and having a riotous time at this truly family event.

The band "Cloudburst" were great, giving us the real live Barn Dance music, and no matter how inexperienced the dancers, Keith Harris, a patient and genial caller, talked them through the steps. The Sausage & Mash supper with oodles of onion gravy was voted a great success, and provided a boost to the energy needed for the second half.

We raised £370 towards the village funds which will help with the refurbishment of the Kitchen.

With such a good turn out, and with everyone having a great time, there were requests for another later in the year with same band and caller.



Valentine**s E**vening

All the romantics of Ashley Green had a wonderful time in the Village Hall at the Valentines Dinner and Dance on the 18th February.

Seventy two lucky people sat down to a four course meal, drank copious amounts of alcohol, and donated £300 within 15 minutes of frenzied raffle ticket selling - The smooth tongued ticket seller promising mythical holidays abroad as prizes.

We must thank the organisers and their helpers who worked so hard before, during and after the event, and also Bernard Carey who sang memorably after the meal, accompanied by Sylvia Howe on piano. The decorations certainly made the hall look splendid.

After the meal everyone danced the night away to excellent music from the decks of John Hollylee, and we must mention Dave Lea jiving with his plastered leg resting on a chair. You couldn't keep him down.

This event was enjoyed by all and is becoming so popular that tickets sold out almost before the ink was dry, or the posters put up.

The CONSORT Sang

The **Consort** have sung at St John's several times before to raise funds.

Having prepared for a concert at Wigginton, which was then cancelled due to double booking, they came instead to St. John's in November to help raise more for the church funds.

As usual there was the widest range of unaccompanied singing, and truly something in the music for everyone as it covered pieces from the 16th Century, songs by the Beatles and Swingle singers, classic English music and a bit of jazz, all to the highest standard.

You can clearly see that the eight singers really enjoy what they do, and their enthusiasm came across to a full house. This was A Cappella music of the highest standard!

Don't miss them next time! And don't miss the wine and variety of finger food that was provided after the concert - St Johns has a great team there.

Keep your eyes open for flyers and posters which will be circulated for all future events, and make sure you book early. You don't want to miss out!

THE VILLAGE HEARTBEAT

(How things Change)

by Lorna Ingham

Where is the heart of a village? What is the thread that ties a community together? Ashley Green has a thriving community association that strives to link a village of commuters and long time residents with interesting events. A glorious summer's day with the village fair in full swing on the Green is the rural idyll that so many city dwellers envy.

However, the shop and village school which were always natural gathering points are long gone and for those who remember how things used to be, it does feel as if the heart of the community has been taken and the road that runs through the centre of the village, is also the road that divides it.

There is a wonderful documentary film made in Ashley Green during the War that is a vivid testament to how life has changed over the last 60 years. Then the road is just a muddy indentation in what looks like one long rolling meadow from shop, to school, farm and church. . The focus of the village was the Green not the road, cars were the exception not the rule and everyone walked or cycled.

The film is centred on the school and is all about how the villagers coped with the influx of evacuees from London. Then the youngsters arriving from the bombed East End were shocked to discover milk came from cows and apples grew on trees but they were also delighted to find the village green and woods as their playground. Sadly some of the children also brought with them a nasty case of impetigo that was a gift the village wasn't expecting.

However, during the war, community spirit was essential and everyone had to support each other to get through the tribulations of deprivation and rationing. 4 ounces of butter, 2 ounces of sugar and 2 eggs sound like the ingredients for a decent pudding but in 1940 that was one adult ration for the week, so many skilful ways had to be found to eke out mealtimes. Most families kept chickens and grew their own vegetables and fruit. Looking back now from a position of privilege, one could say the wartime generation did have one of the healthiest diets

ever, low in fat and sugar and high in fresh fruit and veg but how many children today could go without chocolate for a month, let alone years?

Can many of us imagine our children weaving plaid scarves and tweed trousers out of wool collected from hedgerows? Or making camouflage nets for the war effort in the playground. Alongside the usual Maths and English classes, practical nature lessons were school essentials for collecting wood and gathering scarce materials.

"Waste not want not" was the wartime motto. One Christmas all the men from the village who were serving in the forces were each sent a parcel from the school with hand knitted khaki gloves and a poem about the Chiltern Hills written by the teacher Mrs Turner (*see last issue of Community Call*).

"The Chiltern Hills, their woods and rills fill us with pride and pleasure Though Ashley Green has always been from schooldays our chief treasure"

Joan Ayres who lived in a two bedroomed bungalow with her parents and brother recalls that there were many weekends when up to 15 people would be sleeping in their house. They hosted two evacuee families during the week and at weekends they could be joined by neighbours or friends forced out of London by the bombing raids There were many nights (before the Air Warden's would usher you inside) when you would see the bombing of London just standing on the Green.

The evacuees who pulled her inside from watching two planes in a dogfight over the village probably saved Joan's life. Later that day in the orchard they found spent bullet cases in the grass under the trees – the Londoners knew stray bullets could kill. They also dragged Joan under the table when a doodlebug came over the village and it's engine cut out directly overhead – they understood the signs. Luckily nothing exploded here; it moved on to Heath End near Wigginton. The nearest bomb that actually affected the Village was near Marlins Farm on Denny's lane, where a landmine exploded and put all the windows out of true in a lot of the houses in Hog Lane.

The only local fatality Joan heard of was a bomb dropped on a blacksmith's smithy in Chesham where one lady got killed - the evacuees said it was the pilots getting rid of their bombs before they headed home.

But Enid Reeves remembers one villager dying during an Air Raid. There was a local man, Jake who worked for Mr Ratcliffe, the farmer, and he lived in the last post office cottage near the farm with an old housekeeper called Jenny. During one of the noisier air raids he came outside shouting for the farmers wife *"Mrs Ratcliffe help, Jenny's took frit and died"*. He had been hiding with her under the stairs during the air raid and obviously the shock and fear had given the housekeeper a heart attack.

There was great excitement one day when an allied light aircraft landed in a local field and one brave little boy went up to the pilot and said *"You are not going to bomb us are you?"*

Of course Bovingdon airfield, built during the war, was the scene of a lot of wartime action as an American base. As a training aerodrome it was never free from the noise of planes warming up all day long, every day of the war. The children loved it when the pilots drove through the village handing out sweets and there were a number of young village girls who ended up marrying Americans. But whilst the Americans were making a lot of noise on one side of the village on the other side near where the Tunfield greenhouses are now was a secret radar station manned by RAF officers. Bletchley wasn't far away and they'd often have a barrier across the road with a guard on duty.

Of course The Eagle then as now proved to be a place where friendships were forged. The war had forced strangers together and circumstances encouraged everyone to help and support each other. Many of those wartime friendships continued long after the war with regular cricket matches arranged between Ashley Green and the evacuees who had returned to Chiswick and Northolt.

With many thanks to Joan Ayres and Enid Reeves and the loan of the wartime archive film on Ashley Green School.

We hope to continue to include snapshots of village history, like these, in succeeding issues.

News From St John's

One thing's certain about St John's Church - you can't miss it! With the new speed limits all the drivers get a more leisurely look, and everyone can see that it is a central symbol of village life for those who live here.

We are committed to improve it.

The new replacement fence, with much financial support coming from Ashley Green villagers, has greatly improved the setting of the building and we are committed to further work to upgrade the building. A sound system, with hearing loop, has just been installed, and our architect is working on plans to provide a hot drinks kitchen, a loo and space for the children's activities.

Funds for this capital expenditure have already been set aside by the Parish and such improvements can't come soon enough. We want you to come and enjoy the results!

But what goes on inside these days?

Easy to Remember - St John's has a service every Sunday morning at the same time - 9.30am.

With no other church in the village St John's, although Church of England, welcomes anyone from whatever church background, or none, they might have.

Child Friendly

The Family Service on the first Sunday in every month is shorter and planned as a service which the whole family can enjoy. All ages are invited. On other Sundays, after a few minutes all together, the children have their own Sunday School. Children are a valuable part of the life of St John's.

Money Matters

Like many other organisations relying almost entirely on voluntary contributions, the budget is always tight.

It costs about £25,000 a year to maintain our church, with church members giving being responsible for almost all the money required.

At present Staff salaries, pensions and expenses for our Parish account for the biggest slice of the cake. The rest pays for such items as maintenance, heating, insurance and equipment.

Ashley Green as a village has demonstrated a very supportive attitude towards the church. This is evident by the numbers coming to events like the Autumn Fair and various concerts in the church, and we very much appreciate the ways in which people contribute generously to St John's through fun activities such as these.

Future Investment

Rather than simply trying to hang on to traditional and nostalgic elements of our past, we want St John's to be a church for today, when 'a spiritual dimension' to our lives is increasingly being recognised as vital for us as 21st century human beings. The Christian option is not to be forced on anyone, but a church in this village can make it available and accessible. We work together to keep it well and truly alive.

(Canon) Roger Salisbury
Team Rector

Forthcoming

- Mothers Day Service on Sunday 26th March - 9.30am.
- Walking the parish boundary on Rogation Sunday - more details from the church in May.

Blast from the Past

As mentioned by our chairman, there was a traffic committee back in **1993**. These extracts from the Newsletter way back then make interesting reading for today.

Take a Look!

“It is fair to assume that the (A41) bypass will increase the flow of traffic through the village and it may well also alter the nature of the traffic flow. There may well be an increase in the percentage of larger business and commercial vehicles using the A416 as a link to the bypass and, ultimately, the motorway system.

Traffic projection figures are for the A416 itself rather than traffic in Two Dells Lane and Hog Lane.

The County Council do not perceive Ashley Green having a traffic problem from the point of view of accidents. There are 250 other sites in Bucks with a worse accident record, and the Council is (therefore) unlikely to spend money on traffic calming measures.

As far as the A416 is concerned, the problem the village has to deal with is that some genius in the distant past decided that it was an appropriate road for 'improvement'. He therefore created, in effect, a race track built to a high standard, with clear visibility. All research into traffic speed shows that many drivers drive at the fastest speed that they believe to be safe. If you give drivers a wide, effectively straight road leading to a village, then they will come in at 50 or 60mph or sometimes more. Marking 30 or 40mph speed limits, either on the road itself or on large signs has no effect.

It is probable that the only ways of getting traffic to move slowly are either by physical obstructions or by a guarantee of detection of speeding, ie. traffic cameras. The Council will probably resist physical obstructions which may be the only solution.

Two Dells Lane and Hog Lane present a somewhat different problem.

It is highly unlikely that speed cameras would be installed on either of those roads, and therefore the only alternative is some kind of physical interference with traffic to slow it down. The most obvious way of dealing with this would probably be “Sleeping Policemen”. They are relatively cheap to install, require little or no maintenance and are highly effective. The Committee believe that there is no legal impediment to those constructions being laid down on the side roads, although this may necessitate a speed limit of 30mph introduced on those roads.

An alternative might be to introduce width restrictions which ...would also, to some extent, control speed. There are, considerable practical difficulties in installing width restrictions in an area where there are many wide vehicles. Therefore, the 'Sleeping Policemen' may be the only effective answer to speed in the side roads.”

Will anything be done?

Adverts and Announcements

Advertise your enterprise or activity here.
(There is a charge for **Commercial Businesses**:

Contact us with details of what you want.
Eighth Page (approx.) - £10. Quarter page - £20)

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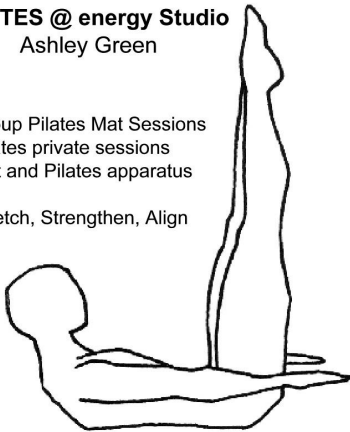
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If you already have experience of choral
singing, can read music, can learn music
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David Harmer - 01442 874931

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(Ashley Green)

Bucks Association for Blind and Partially Sighted People

URGENTLY NEEDED

Voluntary Drivers (regular or occasional) to convey
members to and from Emmanuel Church Broad Street,
Chesham. Mondays 2-4pm

Renee Hollylee 01442 862895
Head Office 01296 487556
Mrs Millward 01494 771645
Expenses of 35p per mile payable

VILLAGE FAIR

The Annual village Summer Fair will be held
on the Green on **Saturday June 10th at
2.30pm.**

Stalls ● Sideshows ● Entertainment ● Tug of War
● Barbeque ● WI Teas - *And lots more.*

Everyone welcome. Should you want to run a stall,
or help in any way at all please contact:-

Mary Axon on 01442 866549

St George's Day

Rounders on the green

SUNDAY April 23rd 2.30pm - 5.00pm

Everyone welcome. No skill needed. Just turn up and
have fun. Bring a picnic and drinks.