

Ashland Meeting Place



We are finally at the point of construction! The steel frame is due to be installed at the end of September, with the containers arriving early in October. Once the containers are in place and the building secured, then the internal fit-out can commence.

This is YOUR meeting place, and it's being built based on requests from the community in Ashland. How would you like to use it? Is there a group you know who'd like to occupy it for a regular meeting or event, or a one-off? We've had requests from residents for yoga classes, exercise classes, knit and natter. Who do you know who could set those up? Is there a group that needs a new home? Or a project you've been wanting to start and needed the space for?

As the Meeting Place evolves, please post your pictures of the building work.

We'll be creating a collage of the journey of the build, which will form part of the internal décor. We want to capture your experience of how the building came to be.

We'll also be asking for your help with some of the landscaping. It's a chance to get involved, bring along children to take part (and entertain them for free!) and play a part in making Ashland an amazing place to live. More details will be available on Facebook or via the Clerk.

And we'll need a group of residents to help with the management of the building. We'll share more details of what is likely to be involved once we have more guidance on how the building will run and how bookings can be made. Could you make a difference to Ashland?

We'll be organising an opening

event once the building is much closer to completion, which will be a chance for everyone to come along and take a look.

The Parish Council and the Steering Group have worked on this project for a considerable time. We're so grateful to all those who have given their time to get us this far, to those on the Parish Council for their support, and as always to our brilliant architect, Andrew, who has been working on this for free.

Please continue to follow the Ashland Neighbourhood Watch and the Simpson and Ashland Parish Council Facebook pages. We're posting updates as we have them, and please share the details with your friends and neighbours.

● **Caroline Voight (on behalf of the Steering Group)**

Only Connect

This is the first parish newsletter since April 2021. It's good to be back after a six-month interval!

The Parish Council does its best to communicate with all residents of Simpson and Ashland, using the resources available. Communication has been particularly important over the past eighteen months. Starting in March 2020, we produced a series of Bulletins that were circulated to residents for whom we had an email address, displayed on noticeboards, and posted on the Parish Council's Facebook page. The Bulletins provided information aimed at supporting residents around the uncharted waters of the pandemic and lockdown. Feedback indicated that they were appreciated. As the world began to open up and people's needs changed, the emailed Bulletins have continued, with a focus more on local matters and opportunities.

As part of that development, those who were on the email list for bulletins were invited to transfer their contact details to the Mailchimp service, as of 1 September. Many, but not all, have done so, and they will continue to receive regular messages, sent via the Clerk. We are keen to enlarge the list of Mailchimp subscribers, so that we can communicate more effectively to more people across the parish. It's easy to sign up – just go to <http://eepurl.com/hGckn5> and follow the instructions.

And if you have yet to sign up to the Parish Council's Facebook page, you will find details of how to do so on page 12.

In tandem with this increased emphasis on electronic



communication, it has been decided to reduce the number of printed Newsletters from four to three a year. So, all being well, the next one will be coming through your letterbox in February 2022.

Carry on chatting

It's been a long time coming, but finally the Simpson Village Coffee Morning group is able to meet face-

to-face indoors!

When lockdown began in March 2020, we had to be content with



meeting online or, when guidelines and weather permitted, outdoors. But since the end of August, we've been gathering inside every Tuesday morning from 10.00 am to noon to chat or play board and card games. Due to the continued closure of Simpson Village Hall, we're meeting in St Thomas's Church and would like to thank the Rev Nicola Vidamour and Iola Samuels (Churchwarden) for being so welcoming. It costs £1.50 for refreshments and there's an optional raffle.

While masks are not required, we ask everyone to sanitise their hands on entry and sit at a reasonable distance from one another. Doors are kept open for ventilation.

We'd love to see you! We also send our best wishes and thanks to Anne Monk, who was the driving force behind the setting up and organisation of the group, until her recent move from Simpson to Devon.

● Ruth McCracken

Bowlers Close

After construction work lasting for nearly two years, the Bowlers Close development is all but finished. The first occupants of the four houses are moving in – a warm welcome to Simpson to all of them!

The 'all but' refers to the outstanding task of clearing and restoring the green spaces between the boundary and the road over the bridge. That is the responsibility of the developer, White Box. The Parish Council and Milton Keynes Council have it under regular scrutiny.

The approach road to the bridge and the widened entrance to Bowler Close have been resurfaced and a pavement has been added. Those features, together with the changed use of the Close, have implications for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. In the absence of road markings, it is vital that all concerned remain vigilant. Use the pavement when you can.



During the construction of what is now Bowlers Close, the green public amenity spaces between the site boundary and the access road became a parking lot for the constructors' vehicles and a storage space for building materials. Amid all the mess and mayhem, a single granite stone

The Delyth Loxton memorial stone

has weathered the onslaught. The metal plaque reads:

"THE LIGHT STILL SHINES"
TO DEL
WITH LOVE FROM HER
FRIENDS
1977

Passers by often ask how that simple memorial came to be there?

In April 1972, twelve-year-old Delyth Loxton, known as Del, moved to a newly-built house in Woughton Park, with her parents, Carole and Roger, and her

younger sister Caryn.

Del attended the grammar school in Bletchley, before winning a bursary to Bedford School for Girls, where she excelled academically. She was also an enthusiastic and regular attender at the George Amey youth club, then located in Bridge House, next to Bowlers Bridge. In the 1977 school holidays she persuaded her parents to let her buy a moped so that she could travel to Bedford to meet a boyfriend. On her last trip there she died, following a collision with a lorry, an accident resulting from her own misjudgement.

Del's friends at the youth club wanted a physical way to remember her by. Before moving to Milton Keynes, the Loxtons had lived in Malvern, where Del loved walking in the nearby hills. The piece of granite, which forms her memorial in Simpson, was donated by the Conservators of the Malvern Hills and installed with the co-operation of Milton Keynes Development Corporation. The stone has survived, undamaged, for 44 years and we are committed to ensuring that the 'light still shines' in Del's memory. Members of the Simpson in Bloom group have recently tidied the grass around the stone and we hope to see the wider area restored to a more fitting state very soon.



News from the Blue Light Hub

The Blue Light Hub, at the far western end of the parish, has been in operation for over a year.

Below, Mark Begley, Head of Operations Emergency and Urgent Care, provides an insider's view of how the ambulance service operates from the Hub, for the benefit of all of us.

The recently-arrived Station Commander of the Fire and Rescue Service at the Hub is Adam Burch, who is taking the opportunity to remind us of the importance of smoke alarms. Adam has known Simpson all his life, as his grandparents have lived in Hanmer Road for the past 48 years



Staff from Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police

News from South Central Ambulance Service at the Blue light Hub

After a successful relocation into the Blue Light Hub, South Central Ambulance Resource Centre remains a busy integrated asset within the tripartite partnership for service delivery within Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas.

We are continuing to run our 999 operations and Patient Transport teams alongside our support services and have embraced the unique opportunities presented to engage with our blue light colleagues here in the Hub. To support delivery of our key performance targets we have established a network of stand-by points, where vehicles wait until dispatched. This ensures the fastest response times for those patients that need us with life threatening emergencies. We deploy rapid response vehicles and ambulances, each with highly-skilled staff, trained in the use of the latest medical equipment.

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust serves a population of approximately 7 million

across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire. One of our key challenges this year has been keeping up with demand, particularly in emergency 999 calls where we have seen a steady year-on-year increase. This comes at a time of a national shortage of paramedics. As well as supporting staff from within the Trust to train to become qualified paramedics, we have also been working with Oxford Brookes and other local universities to ensure that we are building the required capacity within the higher education sector, to increase the volume of graduate paramedics entering the job market in future years.

The global pandemic continues to add pressures and changes in the way we work. However, we are ever adapting, and we maintain collaboration with our cohabitants to ensure we meet the national requirements for our base to remain Covid-19 safe and, in turn, continue to protect the communities we all serve.

For more information about South Central Ambulance Service please visit www.scas.nhs.uk

Mark Begley
Head of Operations Emergency and Urgent Care - Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale

Do you have working smoke alarms?

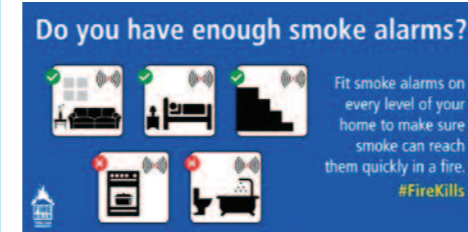


**Buckinghamshire
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**
we save lives
bucksfire.gov.uk

In 1987, only 9 per cent of households in the UK had a working smoke alarm. Roll forward to today, and current figures indicate about 90 per cent of households now have a working smoke alarm. However, in some instances, smoke alarms are not fitted in the right place, or are not suitable for the occupiers' needs.

Correctly installed working smoke alarms can help prevent injury and minimise damage in the event of a fire in the home. It is crucial that any outbreak of fire in the home is quickly detected, with the alarm raised at the earliest possible stage of smoke production and fire growth.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service believes every home should have smoke alarms and no home should be unprotected.



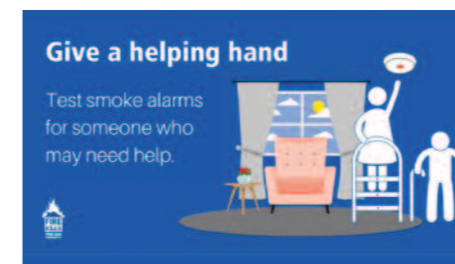
Top Tips – Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms are cheap and easy to install - they are available from DIY stores, electrical shops and most high street supermarkets.
- Fit a smoke alarm on every floor of your home.
- Smoke alarms should be located in a circulation space such as a hall or landing, as a minimum.

- Additionally, smoke alarms should be fitted in every room in the house which is regularly inhabited.
- Heat alarms could also be fitted in the kitchen, and where possible interlinked with the smoke detectors.
- All smoke alarms (including hard wired or those with removable batteries) should be replaced after ten years, or by the 'replace by' date indicated on the base.
- Check all your alarms regularly (at least monthly!). If one is found to be defective, don't wait for the ten-year lifespan to end – replace it immediately!

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service provides a free Fire and Wellness service for anyone who is vulnerable, or at risk from fire. We will visit you in your home, and provide you with fire safety advice and guidance, and detection equipment. More information can be found at on our website - bucksfire.gov.uk, just search for Fire and Wellness.

To see if you or someone you know might be eligible, please contact us by email centraladmin@bucksfire.gov.uk or call 01296 744477.



Seasonal Safety Advice – Check Your Chimney!

As the summer draws to a close and we prepare for colder evenings, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is urging people who have open fires or stoves to take care.

Please ensure your chimney is in good condition and is regularly swept.

A blocked or defective chimney can cause carbon monoxide poisoning as well as a fire. So regular inspection and cleaning of chimney flues can help to identify and eliminate issues before they become a problem.

Make sure your chimney is swept

regularly by a certified chimney sweep. The recommended frequencies depend upon the fuel you burn.

As a quick guide, recommended frequencies are:

- Smokeless coal - at least once a year
- Wood - up to four times a year
- Bituminous coal - twice a year
- Oil or gas - once a year (refer to the Gas Safe Register for gas)

It is also important to have working smoke alarms in your home and that you test them once a month.

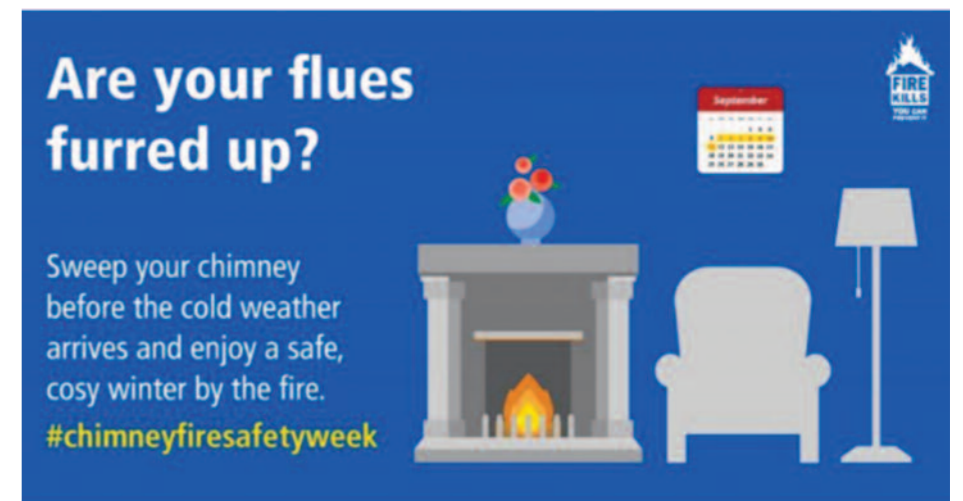
If you are using an open fire or stove it is also advisable to invest in a carbon monoxide detector, as early warning can make the difference.

Top tips – Safe Chimney Use

- Always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed.
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.

- If you have recently opened up, or are about to start to use a fireplace, make sure it is inspected by a qualified person.
- When burning wood, use dry, seasoned woods only.
- Never burn cardboard boxes or paper.
- Inspect your chimney breast, particularly in the roof space.
- Make sure that the chimney breast is sound, and that sparks or fumes cannot escape through cracks or broken bricks.
- Ensure wood burners are installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure the appliance receives enough air to allow the fuel to burn properly.
- Consider fitting a carbon monoxide detector.

Adam Burch
Station Commander West Ashland,
Buckinghamshire Fire &
Rescue Service



Top tip

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no taste or smell. Breathing it in can make you unwell, and it can kill if you are exposed to high levels. The main symptoms are headaches, nausea, breathlessness, collapse, loss of consciousness and dizziness.

Incorrectly installed, poorly maintained or poorly ventilated cookers/heaters/boilers/fireplaces are common causes of accidental exposure to CO. Make sure they are properly maintained and serviced, and chimneys are regularly swept, and install a CO detector in your home.

News from St Thomas's Church

If you have been in the churchyard recently, you may have seen men digging holes at the east end of the building! This is part of the investigative work to determine the cause of the cracks in the wall. The diocesan surveyor and structural engineer have inspected the site and have recommended that measuring devices are installed for at least twelve months to monitor the movement.

In the north-east corner of the churchyard, work has begun to clear an overgrown area, used for many years to dump spoil from new graves. The first phase was to remove trees and bushes to allow a contractor, in Phase 2 to level the ground. Phase 3 is seeding and turning the area into lawn, to allow for more burial plots. The project should be completed by the New Year and, eventually, between twenty and thirty extra plots will be available.

The biodiversity project and the letters we had to put on some of the graves to remind people of the regulations, have caused a lot of tension. We have had several gardening working parties in the churchyard over the summer and will continue those in the coming year. We plan to protect some areas of the churchyard where rare flowers have been found, whilst keeping the area around the graves tidy and accessible. All of this work is done by volunteers.

We have been delighted to provide a home for the Tuesday Coffee Morning and were glad to be joined by a small group from the Day Care Service at The Walnuts. We have also been pleased to host concerts and quizzes again. Weddings, baptisms and funerals are now also taking place in church.

We will be holding a Harvest Supper with some home-grown entertainment



on the evening of Saturday 25 September, followed by our Harvest Festival service the following morning. Advance booking is no longer required for church services, so do come and join us any Sunday at 10:30 am. We are retaining social distancing between the seats and wearing masks to sing. Other plans for the autumn include Light in the Darkness – remembering those who have died - from 2.00 – 4.00 pm on Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 October, and our annual Remembrance Day service on Sunday 14 November.

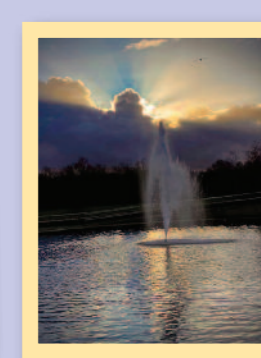
Nicola is now back from her sabbatical. She wrote a book called Where Two Rivers Meet, which flows out of the time she spent as a Methodist mission partner in Russia (2003-2009). The book will be published by Sacristy Press sometime next year.

● **Nicola Vidamour (Minister)**
revnicolav@gmail.com
01908 322366

● **Iola Samuels (Church Warden)**
iola.jb.samuels@gmail.com
07855 757005



Ashland through the lens...



Mad about books...

It's good to see that the Simpson Book Exchange outside the Village Hall is still being well used. Many thanks to all our keen readers who have helped to keep it running smoothly. You may have seen the notice saying 'No more donations – we have run out of space!'. I recently had to take a huge carload of books to the Willen Hospice warehouse, as we simply don't have room in the Hall to store the sizeable overflow. Also, some were clearly unsuitable. So, for the time being, let's operate on a 'take one, replace one' basis. If you do have large numbers of books you want to dispose of, you can take them to one of the charity shops or book a slot at the Willen Hospice warehouse at Kiln Farm.

An important exception to this, however, is our children's book section. This is sadly depleted, as books are taken out and rarely replaced. So, we would welcome donations of books for young readers to go in our lovely desk and would urge borrowers to replace books once read, so we can keep the collection going.

Many thanks again, and please do get in contact if you have any comments or suggestions.

● **Gill Needham**
Gillneedham3317@gmail.com
01908 670700

Thanks to Lars de Wijngaert for these stunning images of Ashland.

Open Space

Across Simpson, residents have become involved in managing the areas around where they live, to better support other creatures to thrive. Thanks to everyone.

From the first meetings a year or so ago, it has been encouraging to see how so many people have recognised the opportunities to improve Simpson in ways which encourage the diversification and increase of insects, birds, wildflowers and small mammals such as hedgehogs. Actually, many creatures 'hog-the-hedges' and that is why shrub-planting, leaf piles and hedges are so important to consider at this time of year.

The patches of long grass across the village have now been mowed, and thoughts turn to increasing the variety of wildflowers that could bloom next year. There are also places where hedges need mending and 'gap-filling'. Some residents have said that they do not want new hedges planting, and some have found the 'untidiness' that goes with allowing the grass to grow a concern. The Parish Council, which works with MK Council and its contractors to manage open spaces, is keen to hear all views as it develops its approach to the call from MK Council: 'Everyone across MK including business, schools, and residents are being asked

Around and About

by the Council to take a role in helping to tackle climate change.

Following the Tree Survey which MK Council carried out in Simpson, and an open meeting with officers from MKC, work has been carried out on some trees and a few dead trees removed. Looking to the future, it is important to plant new stock and there are places where new stock could be planted - probably fruit trees and small - medium height varieties - which will help to ensure a green and interesting landscape.

● Sheila Thornton

Pavements are for people so

Please do **NOT** park on pavements (even half and half) and...

Spend some time this autumn clearing away any vegetation that has spread from your property across the walkway. Children, buggy-pushers, and those who are partially-sighted or have mobility issues, will be particularly grateful.

Rubbish!

A big thank you to everyone who turns out on the last Saturday of the month for litter picking across Simpson and to everyone who collects dropped rubbish when out walking.

A canal towpath clear up is being looked into for the end of October, working with Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council, Old Woughton Parish Council and the Canal & River Trust. If you enjoy walking or cycling or fishing the canal, please consider joining in, even if only for a short time. Contact: clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk

MK Connect: Demand Responsive Transport

Many residents have contacted the Parish Council to register their disappointment in the way the MK Connect service (which replaced the number 18 bus) is operating. For others, it has been well-received. The PC is working with other parish councils to press for improvements. We will keep you informed.

can offer. 11.00 am in the lounge in the main building.

We can now start to plan for the coming winter months and are hoping that, this year, families can be together again for Christmas.

● Karen Steeden



News from The Mount

Here at The Mount we are slowly getting back to something like normality, following the easing of Covid restrictions. Coffee morning has restarted, bingo has been played and we have even enjoyed a fish-and-chip lunch all together, instead of it just being delivered to the door.

Doubtless, Covid has been hard for everyone, but if you are elderly, on your own and have health issues it was an extremely challenging time. We had our losses and were unable to pay our final respects to friends and neighbours by attending the funerals. We are lucky, here, to have a good support network and community and, somehow, we have got through it.

We have welcomed new residents, Stewart Pye, Kevin Payne and Anne Minns, and celebrated the golden wedding anniversary of John and Janice Jefferys (see photo).

We will be supporting the

Macmillan Coffee morning on **Friday 24 September** with a cake sale. Everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy the best our home bakers



Introducing Katherine Harmsworth

Hello, my name is Katherine and I started in the role of Simpson and Ashland Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer at the end of June. I saw the post advertised in a Parish Council email bulletin and thought it was the perfect opportunity to combine part-time work with my love of the local area. My responsibilities include making sure the Parish Council completes all of its legal duties, keeping the finances in order and being a point of contact for the local community.

I've lived in Simpson for almost six years and have really come to love the area. The recent lockdowns provided me with plenty of opportunity to explore and made me really appreciate how accessible our green spaces are. This came in particularly useful as I have two young children who love being outdoors.

I work part-time, 5 hours a week, so the best way to contact me is via email at clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk



Introducing Ross Eatwell

Joining the Parish Council was not one of my New Year's Resolutions at the start of 2021, however a 'gentle shove' from my wife, Rachel, landed me in the team in May. Our three children were extremely excited - their understanding was I would have a direct line to the Prime Minister and were full of ideas for me to deliver to him. They were no less excited when my first assignment was to organise the repair of the village noticeboards! Four months in, I am far from up to speed with the running of a Parish Council but full of admiration for all the great work the members do.

Five Acres outcome

The story so far ... The Five Acres residential nursing home, in the former Simpson Rectory, closed in March 2017. Since then, the buildings have remained unoccupied. In September 2019, the then owner was granted planning permission by Milton Keynes Council to convert the property into nine residential units of differing sizes. That plan wasn't pursued, and the site was sold in February 2020. In June 2020, the new owners, Papayyah Developments, submitted plans to convert the building into a 28-unit House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The Parish Council and a number of Simpson residents submitted objections to those plans and, last November, Milton Keynes Council refused the application on a number of grounds.

In May, Papayyah Developments lodged an appeal against that decision with the Secretary of State, challenging the basis of MKC's refusal. Over the summer, the appeal has been considered by an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. The principal, detailed response came from Gemma Davies, a Senior Planning Officer at MKC. The Parish Council also responded, again, in support of MKC's original decision and challenging the detail of the appeal case. Twenty-seven additional critical comments were submitted by local residents, MK Councillors Paul Trendall and Charlotte Hall, and MP Iain Stewart. Many thanks to all concerned.

The Planning Inspector's decision was issued on 10 September. He

dismissed the appeal, but only on one of the five issues in contention - the level of parking provision. As for the other four - the effect on housing mix and community cohesion; the effects of noise; the effect on trees; and the implications for pedestrians and cyclists - he concluded that the June 2020 plans were acceptable.

You can read the Inspector's four-page Appeal Decision on the Planning page of the Parish website www.simpsonandashland.co.uk/planning You can access all of the documents connected with the Five Acres plans on the MKC planning portal www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/publicaccess Click on 'Simple search' and enter the case reference 20/01529/FUL.

Dismissal of the appeal means that the plans for a 28-unit HMO cannot go ahead. It remains to be seen what other plans the owners will bring forward....

Simpson Village Hall

Open for business... well, almost

Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback on the future of Simpson Village Hall. There was a wide range of views on what that might look like, and the overriding message was how much it is valued and seen as integral to the local community.

Following these discussions, a number of residents have volunteered to work with the Parish Council to decide what should happen to the hall in the short and longer term. The group met for the first time in mid-September and the plan is to trial a 'soft reopening' in October, with two of the regular groups, following Covid-19 measures. If the trial is successful, the aim is to be fully open for hire from the beginning of November. That timetable is feasible, now that a new boiler has been installed.

As part of the process, the working group will review the hire charges, which are likely to be increased.

As discussed at the public meeting in August, the PC also has to consider the longer-term future of the hall, to ensure that it meets the needs not only of those who use it now but in, say, ten or twenty years' time. The commissioned feasibility study has provided a set of possible options for the future, and while none of these is set in stone, they provide a catalyst for further discussion. We will come back to you over the months ahead as we consider how the future of the hall can best be assured.

If you are interest in getting involved in the workings of the hall, please contact the Clerk: clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk

● David Pye and Sheila Thornton

Simpson Garden Group

As part of the phased reopening of Simpson Village Hall, the Garden Group is hosting two talks, at the start of its winter programme. Both start at 8.00 pm

Tuesday 12 October

In the not so bleak midwinter - Timothy Walker (Botanist and former Director of the University of Oxford Botanic Gardens)

Tuesday 9 November

Do plants hear? - Peter Lickorish (Horticultural lecturer)

All welcome. Non-members £3.00.

Meanwhile, members of the Simpson in Bloom group (plus young assistants) have been harvesting the apples in the Community Garden – including this Newton Wonder (which didn't demonstrate the existence of gravity, on this occasion).



NHS Celebration – 4 and 5 July

To celebrate the anniversary of the formation of the NHS and to say a big 'Thank You' to frontline workers, the

Simpson Garden Group decided to organise a community event, centred on the area around the village



(L-R) Jane Anderson, Wendy Jordan, Lena Bates and Brenda Ladd, who were responsible for organising and creating the display.

Christmas Tree.

Villagers were invited to create a Rainbow Tree, by painting wooden discs in rainbow colours and hanging them on the branches. An amazing collection of 70 decorated discs appeared and all who took part enjoyed the experience.

Using a garden rose-arch, decorated in rainbow balloons, the group flew two large banners thanking the NHS. A wreath and posy of garden flowers reminded everyone of those who had lost their lives to Covid in the pandemic. A timeline of significant dates in the history of the NHS was also displayed, reminding us all how lucky we are now.

The Garden Group thanks Steve Bates, Ross and Rachel Eatwell and their three children for their help with the display.

● Lena and Steve Bates

Charles Warren Academy

At Charles Warren Academy we were extremely happy to welcome all of our pupils back to school at the beginning of September. They have settled well and participated in some fun, practical tasks with their new teachers and many a smile could be seen!

There has also been great excitement, as over the summer we had some projects completed which the children were eager to see and use. We had our libraries updated with huge floor-to-ceiling murals, a classroom converted into an art studio and a book vending machine delivered.

● Danielle Barnes (Vice Principal)



Summer Play Scheme

The weather wasn't particularly kind to us these summer holidays but the residents attending Play Rangers sessions certainly were!

Charles Warren Academy welcomed us on four of our five weeks and their wonderful grounds proved incredibly popular with all the children, young people and families that came along. We played at the Ouzel Valley Simpson park one Friday and found that to be another family-friendly, safe space to play.

We had themed weeks: Transport, Healthy Eating, Summer fun, Animals and Disney. Each week there were at least two craft activities: junk modelling, painting rocks, clay sculpting, colouring,



sticking and making. We introduced Free Play, Risky, Imaginative, Creative, Physical and Developmental play elements. Problem solving, exploration, teamwork and resilience were skills we practiced. So, through the varied range of sports played and activities



undertaken, we saw some children grow in ability and confidence over the summer period.

On our busier



weeks we had more than twenty children and young people, at any one time, as well as parents and carers, but even on our very wettest day we had four committed youngsters who embraced playing with us in the rain. As we sought some shelter, we had the opportunity to come alongside these young people and get to know them, as well as being able to reach out and signpost a parent to essential services that could benefit her family, long term.

Woughton Play Rangers had a great time with the families of Simpson and Ashland. Thank you for playing with us this summer!

● Woughton Play Rangers



Simpson traffic – calm down!

Over the years, effort has gone into traffic calming measures in Simpson. Although they have helped to reduce speed, they have probably had little impact on the volume of traffic through the village. More needs to be done to limit both speed and volume. Most other villages in Milton Keynes have much lower volumes because through-traffic has been discouraged by redesigning the roads and, in some cases, closing them. What could be done in Simpson?

Measures used elsewhere include:

- Installing road narrowings, which require traffic to slow down or give way;
- Introducing a 20 m.p.h limit;
- Installing permanent electronic speed counters;
- Paving sections of road;
- Widening pavements to narrow the road and improve safety for pedestrians.

The objective of any additional traffic calming should be to significantly increase the amount of time it takes for traffic to travel via Simpson village and thus to make the journey less appealing.

With the latest national and local government initiatives on walking and cycling very much in mind, now is a good time to take another look at this problem.

What needs to be done? Here are some suggestions:

- Assemble a group of residents to look at the issues and come up with proposals for discussion;
- Carry out a new survey of traffic volumes and speed; perhaps those involved in previous surveys could help;
- Find out how much of the traffic is local and how much is through-traffic;
- Use the survey results to produce ideas for more calming measures;
- Meet with Fenny Stratford Town Council to share views and ideas;
- Prepare a report for Milton Keynes Council.

Thanks to those who have already expressed an interest in getting involved. If you would like to join us, contact Eric Gates at eric.gates24@gmail.com

● Eric Gates



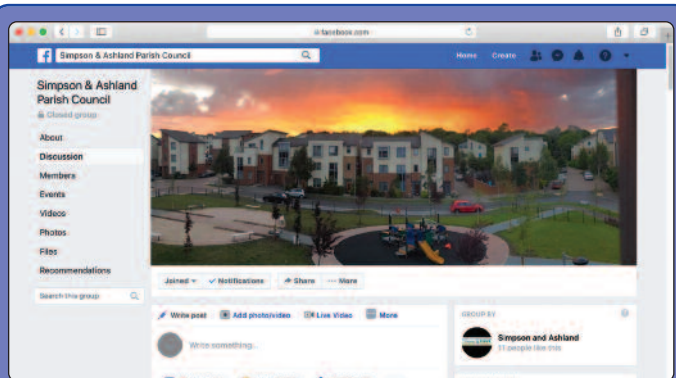
Advice Service

@ Hedgerows Family Centre
Call 01908 239000 for advice

Whatever the issue, we will do our best to help you...

- General advice, support and someone to listen
- Pensions
- Tax Credit help
- Eviction
- Rent arrears advice
- Managing a bereavement
- Form filling
- Housing advice
- Work issues
- Food vouchers
- Health & mental wellbeing signposting

Service provided by Woughton Community Council



Simpson & Ashland Parish Council on Facebook

Are you a Facebook user? Become a friend of Simpson & Ashland on Facebook. Stay in touch, comment on and ask questions about what is going on in your neighbourhood. We also tweet! @SimpsonAshland



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