

A Royal Blue Visit

On Wednesday 11 October, The Prince of Wales visited the Blue Light Hub at West Ashland to highlight the importance of supporting the mental health of emergency responders during the week of World Mental Health Day.

Prince William was given a guided tour of the Hub, one of the first purpose-built combined fire, police, and ambulance premises in the country, to witness first hand, how the blue light

services are working closely together to deliver the best possible service to the community.

The Prince spent time with a small group of staff from South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) Thames Valley Police (TVP), Bucks Search and Rescue (BSAR) and BFRS. His Royal Highness has a longstanding commitment to encourage people to speak openly about their mental health



and the engagement session focused on the importance of mental wellbeing. Joining Prince William was the esteemed broadcaster, journalist, and psychologist,

Dr Sian Williams, who facilitated discussions with individuals in the early stages of their careers. These conversations underscored the paramount importance of equipping emergency service personnel with the tools to safeguard their mental well-being and enhance their personal resilience.

Supporting the mental health of emergency responders is a cause close to the Prince's heart, as he saw first-hand the challenges emergency responders face on a daily basis while serving as a pilot with RAF search and rescue and East Anglian Air Ambulance.

● **Adam Burch**
Group Commander Service
Delivery North & Resourcing



Parish road works

There will soon be restrictions on roads in the parish, while repairs are carried out.

Simpson Day Centre access road – Ringway are strengthening the foundation of the arch where it crosses Simpson Brook, repairing and strengthening the west brick headwall, and renewing the timber balustrade fences. The work will require a lane closure, with traffic lights, in Simpson Road. The work is scheduled to start on Monday 13 November and to last until Christmas. It will be a complex operation, as there needs to be vehicle access to and from the site.

Simpson Day Centre access road



H9 Groveway - there will be a 40 mph speed restriction while work is carried out on the bridge over the River Ouzel. The start date has yet to be confirmed.

Simpson Garden Group

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 14 November 8.00 pm** at Simpson Village Hall.

Felicity Brimblecombe will be giving a talk on Gertrude Jeckyll's influence on Ickwell Gardens, Bedfordshire. Non-members welcome - £5.00.

The Garden Group is keen to welcome new members. The annual subscription is £15.00. Or if you cannot commit, you are welcome to come to the occasional meeting for £5 a time. We hold six indoor meetings a year at

Simpson Village Hall, on the second Tuesday of the month, starting at 8.00 p.m. There's also a Christmas meal, in December, at The Plough.

Past speakers have included Chelsea Gold medal winners, local garden centre managers, the former Director of Oxford University Botanic Gardens, and the Parks Trust ... Hopefully an interesting and wide variety. Next year's speakers include a delphinium expert and the landscape manager of Woburn Abbey.

The group also arranges

summertime visits to interesting gardens, including Highgrove and the Luton Hoo walled garden.

We organise and fund the Carols and mulled wine get together round the Simpson Christmas tree in mid-December. This year, it will be at **4.00 p.m. on Sunday 10 December**. A small group of members volunteer to maintain the village entry road signs, the War Memorial, tubs at the Village Hall, and other areas round Simpson. These are funded by the Garden Group.

Look out for the posters advertising our meetings on the village notice boards. You are most welcome to join us.

● Jane Anderson

Apple Amble

Simpson Garden Group hosted an Apple Amble afternoon at the Village Hall on Saturday 2 September.

Claire Conway-Crapp and other members of Mid-Shires Orchard Group (MSOG) joined Simpson residents and friends on an amble around a few residents' gardens. Remaining ancient apple and fruit trees were observed and recorded by Claire, for MSOG information.



This activity built on research by Lena Bates, who has put together an amazing amount of information on the heritage fruit trees and orchards around Simpson.

Claire brought along old maps showing the positions of the original orchards in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These were available in the Hall after the amble.

Lena led the amble around the gardens and into the community

garden, before heading for Hanmer Road Green to view the apple and pear trees planted in 2021. The fruit trees opposite the Village Hall, planted in 2022, were also recorded by Claire, for future reference.

Apple cake, drinks and biscuits were enjoyed back at the hall. Thanks go to all who came along and to the residents who kindly opened their gardens for us.

● Susanne Basovic

David Baume

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of Dr David Baume on 5 July, at the age of 80.

David and his wife Carole (who died last year) lived in Simpson from the mid-1990s until 2002, when they moved to Manchester. A few years later they returned to live in Ashland and from the moment he arrived David gave very freely of his time, supporting both Simpson and Ashland. He joined the Parish Council in 2010 and

remained a member for six years. He was chair from 2013 to 2015. He was instrumental in developing the Ashland Serpent art installation in 2013 and, more recently, was a member of the Ashland Lakeside Steering Group.

David was a keen photographer and enjoyed the wildlife on his doorstep. His family have donated a fine photo of a heron, which will be displayed at Ashland Lakeside, in his memory.

We remember David with affection and thanks.

● David Pye



Strawberry Tea for Smile Train

Thank you to all those who supported our event in Simpson Village Hall on Saturday 5 August. £600 was raised for Smile Train, a charity providing life-saving treatment for children around the world who struggle to breathe, speak and eat due to a cleft.

Despite warnings that Storm Antoni was on the way, the weather was fine and a large crowd enjoyed the homemade scones and cakes, strawberries and Pimms.

Theresa Breedon, Monica Shelley and Stephanie Warren were key in making the afternoon such a success. Thanks also to those who baked, gave raffle prizes and donated generously.

People from outside the area remarked on the lovely atmosphere in the hall, saying, 'It's a great village' - and we certainly agree.

● Sian Lewis




Lifeboats
Charity Coffee Morning
 Simpson Village Hall
 Saturday 28th October 10.30 - 12.30
 bacon & veggie rolls / homemade cakes / drinks
RAFFLE
 raffle and cake donations welcome
 contact Monica 01908 679989 or Sian 01908 670529

Believe in children
 **Barnardo's**
Christmas Coffee Morning
 Simpson Village Hall
Saturday 2nd December 10.30 - 12.30
 bacon & veggie rolls / homemade cakes
 mulled wine / coffee & tea
RAFFLE
 raffle and cake donations welcome


Dog waste bins

As dog walkers will be aware, the two waste bins adjacent to the canal towpath at Bowlers Bridge (Bridge 91) and south of Lickorish Bridge (Bridge 92) 'disappeared', without notice, towards the end of August. The Parish Council was quickly on the scent, in the shape of David Tucker, and it soon emerged that the Canal & River Trust had removed all bins along the canal towpath as an economy measure. That failed to recognize that the cost of emptying the bin at Bowlers Bridge was borne by the Parish Council, as part of the wider contract.

Following discussions, the Canal & River Trust has agreed to reinstate the bins in the same locations. DNH, the PC's contractor, will then service both of them. Thank you to those dog walkers who have found alternative deposit points for their bags.



Ashland Lakeside Opening



Well, the sun certainly shone on us when we opened the doors of Ashland Lakeside on Saturday 16 September for our opening event! After many years of planning, our wonderful building came to life, and it was fantastic to see so many residents join us for the inaugural event.

Ashlanders were able to partake in a variety of activities, including face painting, children's crafts, getting up close to the fire engine from the Blue Light Hub, and chatting to the friendly Neighbourhood Watch team, whilst munching on cupcakes and sweets, sipping soft drinks and devouring 70



portions of fish and chips, the latter kindly funded by the Parish Council!

We were also able to share details of how to book Ashland Lakeside and we're delighted to report we have a number of regular bookings on the calendar, but there's still plenty of space for clubs and societies to use the building, and not to mention parties. To find out more about the facilities on offer, go to the Parish Council website www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk and select Ashland Lakeside Community Centre.

None of this would have been possible without the input of our brilliant architect, Andrew Armes, without whom we wouldn't have had a building. We also have to thank the Parish Council for their input and commitment to seeing this project through and the Steering Group who met for many years to mull over ideas, plans and finally arrange the opening event.

Thank you to The Village Plaice for



preparing the fish and chips, Miss Micaela for face painting, Cathy Pope for the cupcakes and sweets and Vincent for the soft drinks and sound system so kindly donated for the event. None of this would have been possible without you.

But it doesn't stop here! Ashland Lakeside still requires a team of residents to arrange other events, promote the building, and support our Facilities Manager, Natasha. We'll meet casually at intervals throughout the year so if you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Katherine, our clerk, for more details clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk

● **Caroline Vooght on behalf of the Steering Group**

Save the date

Winter Holiday Activity Club
at Ashland Lakeside
Community Centre

There will be a Winter Holiday Club for children on the 2 January 2024. More details will be shared on the Parish Facebook page and website.



Summer activities

This summer has been successful, with new local families and familiar faces joining us at Ashland Lakeside. We offered a variety of toys, games, and crafts, with the key ring and puzzle crafts being particularly popular among children. Additionally, we provided a selection of refreshments for everyone to enjoy.

These families have expressed their gratitude for having access to such a pleasant and welcoming environment for their children. We are truly appreciative of the kind and positive feedback we have received and we look forward to their return in the future.

● **Teresa Smith - Treetop Childcare**

A Ton of Runs for Mental Health

I have lived in Simpson since July 2021 and running is central to my life. I will soon be celebrating my 100th Half Marathon at the Milton Keynes Winter Half, on Sunday 10 December. At the same time, I will be raising money for the mental health charity, Mind www.mind.org.uk/about-us/

My running journey started in 2003 after an accident led to a total hip replacement. Being told in your early thirties that you had to have an operation normally associated with people twice your age was devastating. I was fairly active at that time, playing numerous sports as well as running around after four young children. I thought I would be unable to do anything and that I was becoming old before my time.

But despite this blow, six months later, having made a full recovery, I

decided to take up running... but not on a small scale, by entering the 2005 London Marathon, all 26.2 miles! Two decades, six full Marathons, 300 Parkruns (www.parkrun.org.uk) and almost 100 Half Marathons later, I still have the running bug and my hip is as good as new. With a busy homelife, a stressful job and the challenges of life in general, it is easy to allow things to get on top of you and feel overwhelmed. Running has been my escape. As well as the physical benefits, it is great for clearing the head, relieving stress and picking you up when feeling down. I often run on my own but I also love running with other people, which is why, for more than ten years I have been a member of the Redway Runners (www.redwayrunners.com). One of the biggest running clubs in the country, they are, in my opinion, the pride of Milton Keynes for everything



they do for members and the wider community... and such a great bunch of people! In MK we are blessed with so much open space and almost unlimited running/walking/cycling routes. It is truly a runners' paradise and one of the reasons we moved here.

If you would like to donate to my fundraiser go to www.justgiving.com/page/gary-howard-1695159379695

● **Gary Howard**

News from The Mount

Here at *The Mount* we have been enjoying the late summer weather. We were very fortunate to be able to celebrate Jack and Barbara's diamond wedding anniversary on Saturday 9 September outside in the gardens. They also had a card from King Charles. Jack and Barbara met at a dance hall in Purley, Surrey back in 1962 and it was love at first sight. They lived most of their married life in Shirley, Croydon. Jack retired in 1992 and they moved to Honiton in Devon where they stayed until 2020 and then moved to The Mount to be nearer family. They have a daughter, a granddaughter and two great grandchildren.

The late summer sunshine also benefitted Ron's beautiful garden. Ron has won the Peabody Best Pots and Hanging Baskets competition, a huge achievement as there were many entries. He received £100 in vouchers and a certificate. We all agree it was well deserved.

And there's another celebration in prospect – Joan Campbell is looking forward to her 101st birthday at the end of October. As are all her friends, here.

● **Karen Steeden**



Street Champions

Street Champions have been in place since February 2021. Street Champions keep an eye out for neighbours, raising any issues or challenges with the Parish Council, as appropriate. At times, we also circulate relevant information from the Parish Council to residents. It is an informal role.

These are your Street Champions:

- **Langham Way** – Krishan Patel and Lars de Wijngaert
- **Newington Gate** – Caroline Vooght
- **Abbey Road** – Chichi Ezeh
- **Hanmer Road** – Peter Barnes
- **Lissel Road** – Margaret Carrel
- **Millholm Rise & Mount Pleasant** - David Pye
- **Warren Bank** – Catherine Scanlon

To find out more about Street Champions or if you want to become one, contact Cllr Chichi Ezeh Chichi.ezeh@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk

News from St. Thomas' Church

Our Harvest Festival Weekend in early October featured a service for dogs and their owners on the Saturday afternoon and an all-age service featuring The Very Hungry Caterpillar on the Sunday morning.

Harvest Festival donations were collected for the Foodbank. This year we committed to collect at least 350 cans in support of the MK Can event on 16 October. We are grateful to local residents who generously donated cans and enabled us to exceed our target. See the report of MK Can below.

We had two wonderful concerts in September – a Gilbert & Sullivan evening and a September Serenade. There are more concerts to come in November and December, to which all are welcome (see *What's On*, page 8).

Our 2023 wedding season finished on 2 September and we already have three weddings booked for next year. We have also interred the ashes of several local residents in the church yard, including



Eric and June Coles.

Our annual Light in the Darkness event will be on Saturday 4 November. The church will be open from 12.00 noon – 4.00 pm for all who would like to come and remember those who have died – recently or long ago. Every half hour (at 12:15, 12:45, 1:15, 1:45, 2:15, 2:45, 3:15 and 3:45) one of the clergy will lead a short act of remembrance. If you would like your deceased friend(s) or family member(s) to be prayed for, please write their name(s) on the list which will be on a table near the door when you arrive. If you are unable to come but would still like your loved one to be remembered by name, please let us know.

We have recently received a report from an arboriculturalist who has confirmed that four trees are responsible for the structural problems at the east end of the church and will need either pruning or removing. If trees are removed, he suggests that consideration is given to planting one or more of a species with a good track record as far as lack of involvement in building damage is

concerned, such as common hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) or field maple (*Acer campestre*), at least 10 metres from the structure.

Nicola was originally appointed to serve as our minister for five years (until August 2024). We are delighted to announce that this has now been extended to August 2027.

Remembrance weekend – 11th and 12th November

- **Saturday 11th at 7.00 pm** – Remembrance Concert (see *What's On*, page 8).
- **Sunday 12th service at 10.30.** Act of Remembrance, two minutes silence and wreath laying at the War Memorial from 10.50.

Christmas and New Year services

- **Christmas Eve – 10.30 am** - Cafe-Style Carol Service with coffee and mince pies. 11:30pm - Holy Communion.
- **Christmas Day – 10 am** - All-Age Worship
- **New Year's Eve - 10am** at Trinity Church, Fishermead. Parish Methodist Covenant Service. (No service at St. Thomas')

● **Nicola Vidamour (Minister) and Iola Samuels (Church Warden)**

businesses, community associations, charities and churches took part, each providing 350 cans to complete their section of the carefully measured route which snaked around the park – an impressive piece of organization. Fortunately, it was dry on the day. Members of the congregation from St Thomas' Church arrived in good time to set out the cans that had been collected from the Harvest Festival appeal and then settled down to watch over their section. Nicola Vidamour had the additional responsibility of counting and confirming numbers on other parts of the line. The results were duly collated and early in the afternoon came the official announcement that the existing record had been well and truly smashed, with a total of 102,447 cans accounted for. All that remained was to collect up the cans, in crates, and take them to a drop-off



Nicola counting Camp Hill's cans

point. From there, they were all taken to the MK Food Bank, where they will play a major part in supporting MK residents in need over the coming months.

● Peter Barnes

MK Can

You will probably have seen media coverage of the huge event in Campbell Park on Monday 16 October, when an attempt was made on the Guinness World Record for the longest continuous line of cans of food. Many local



(L-R) Pat Hodges, Iola Samuels, ANO, Nicola Vidamour, Yve Morris

Simpson Village Hall

AVAILABLE TO HIRE
FOR REGULAR CLASSES TO ONE OFF EVENTS

We offer a bright space for up to 50 people.
With a fully equipped kitchen.
Wifi.

Accessible toilet and baby changing facility.

Hourly Hire Rate
£20 Standard Hire Charge
£15 for Charitable Organisations
£12.50 for Residents of Simpson and Ashland

Further info & online booking is available at:
<https://simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk/simpson-village-hall/>

Yoga classes

There are regular Yoga classes at **Ashland Lakeside** on **Mondays at 18:15** and **Thursdays at 18:30**. For further information and to book, go to www.beingwellholistichealth.com/book-online

Evergreen Yogalates

Come along to gently move your body, calm your mind and feed your soul

Tuesday at 5.30pm to 6.30pm with Shakila

Simpson Village Hall, MK6 3AD
Bring your mat, water and small cushion/towel

Forever Green

Chair based exercise class for older adults
For everyone – all levels and abilities welcome
Move it or Lose it!
Come and have some fun, improve your sleep and better manage those aches and pains

Movement and exercise helps you:

- Improves your balance
- Increases your stability
- Reduces the risk of falling
- Aches and pains reduce
- Stronger bones
- Sleep better
- Flexibility improves
- Posture is better
- Muscle strength and tone increases
- Better blood pressure control
- Lowers risk of stroke
- Better blood sugar control
- Breathing is better

Join Shakila to get moving, feel healthier and happier
Wednesdays
10.30am to 11.15am at Simpson Village Hall, MK6 3AD
£4 per session
For more information call Shakila on 07752378876

Coffee & Chat

Simpson Village Hall
Tuesdays: 10.00 – 12.00

What's On...

An overview of upcoming events around the parish...



OCTOBER

- **Saturday 28th** Charity Coffee Morning in aid of the RNLI in Simpson Village Hall 10.30-12.30 (see page 3).
- **Saturday 28th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall, proceeds to Royal National Lifeboat Institute 7.00 p.m. Must be booked with missquiz@sky.com or 01908 644785

NOVEMBER

- **Saturday 4th** *Light in the Darkness* at St Thomas' Church 12.00 noon – 4.00 pm (for details, see *News from St Thomas Church* on page 6).
- **Monday 6th** Parish Council meeting in Simpson Village Hall at 8.00 p.m. All welcome.
- **Saturday 11th** Remembrance Concert in St Thomas' Church, Bring & Share Buffet 7.00 p.m.
- **Sunday 12th** Remembrance Sunday service at St Thomas' Church at 10.30. Act of Remembrance, two minutes silence and wreath laying at the War Memorial from 10.50.

DECEMBER

- **Saturday 2nd** Charity Coffee Morning in aid of Barnado's in Simpson Village Hall 10.30-12.30 – see p. 00
- **Saturday 9th** Christmas Concert by students of Hilary O'Donoghue in St Thomas' Church 4.00 p.m.
- **Sunday 10th** Carols, mulled wine and turning on the lights at Simpson Christmas tree 4.00 p.m.
- **Friday 15th** Salvation Army Carols in St Thomas' Church, Bring & Share Buffet 7.00 p.m.
- **Sunday 24th** Cafe-Style Carol Service at St Thomas' Church, with coffee and mince pies 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion service 11:30 p.m.
- **Monday 25th** All-age Worship at St Thomas' Church 10.00 a.m.
- **Saturday 30th** Quiz in St Thomas' Church for Healing Hands 7.00 p.m. Must be booked with missquiz@sky.com or 01908 644785



The winners of the quiz on 30 September in aid of the Tinkers Bridge Community Fridge. Pat Hodges (left) with (L-R) Jane Sheppard, Nigel Chitty, Margaret Young, Panayiota Sutcliffe, Nicki Griffiths, Craig McFarlane, Sue Napleton.

JANUARY 2024

- **Tuesday 2nd** Winter Holiday Activity Club at Ashland Lakeside. More details will be shared on the Parish Facebook page and website.



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



www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk
clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk
07597 304 054 Twitter: @SimpsonAshland



This newsletter can be downloaded from the website – just scan the code

This issue of the parish newsletter has been edited by Peter Barnes and Dylan Jeavons.

With thanks to the following contributors: Jane Anderson, Susanne Basovic, Lena Bates, Adam Burch, Chichi Ezeh, Katherine Harmsworth, Pat Hodges, Gary Howard, Sian Lewis, David Pye, Iola Samuels, Teresa Smith, Karen Steeden, Nicola Vidamour and Caroline Vooght.

Delivered to your letterbox by: Ruth Aguilar, Jane Anderson, Jane Ashby, Peter Barnes, Brenda Daglish, Julie Jones, Sian Lewis, Helen Morland, Cathy Pope, Catherine Scanlon, Karen Steeden, Caroline Vooght, Amanda Weaver.

This newsletter is printed by Prontaprint, 16 & 17 Darin Court, Crownhill, Milton Keynes MK8 0AD