

## Eyes to the skies...



On Thursday 20 June a group of Simpson locals were meeting under the shade of the church oak tree for coffee and a chat when, at about noon, a small red plane flew over. It proceeded to 'draw' a vapour circle, then two slits for eyes and finally a crooked smile. Mission accomplished, it flew off to the east. It caused quite a buzz over MK and cheered up no end of people.

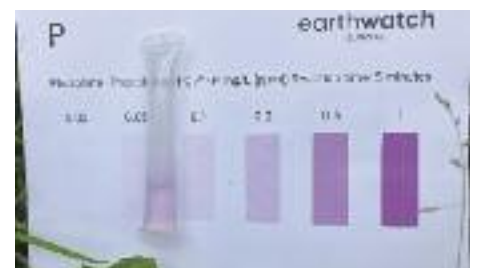
## ...and on the water

On 9 June I took part in *FreshWaterWatch*, which involved receiving a small kit in the post and then selecting a local area of fresh water to sample. I chose the River Ouzel by St Michael's Church on the Open University campus, as the bank there is low, with little risk of falling in.



The results showed that the Ouzel is high in nitrates and therefore has a poor ecological status.

Water samples were taken all over the UK in early June. The results can be seen here: [www.freshwaterwatch.org/pages/great-uk-waterblitz-results](http://www.freshwaterwatch.org/pages/great-uk-waterblitz-results) Zoom in on the map to find Milton Keynes. Click on the markers (green/good, red/bad) to see the exact location and the detailed results. It is surprising that most of our local rivers have a poor ecological status while the Grand Union Canal, the Blue Lagoon and Lodge Lake fare well.



If you are interested, sign up for the next session in September. Go to: <https://earthwatch.org.uk/greatukwaterblitz/>



Visit: [www.freshwaterwatch.org/pages/great-uk-waterblitz-results](http://www.freshwaterwatch.org/pages/great-uk-waterblitz-results)

● Sian Lewis

# Simpson and Ashland in the running spotlight - again

The early May Bank Holiday saw the annual MK Marathon Weekend, one of the biggest running events in the calendar. Starting and finishing at Stadium MK, with part of the route going through our parish, this is a run that is very popular with local and national runners alike. The event hosted world record marathon runner Steve Edwards, running his 1000th marathon. Not only did he break the world record for the fastest 1000 marathons, Steve also raised £10,000 for his chosen charity, Kate's Nursing Home.

MK Marathon Weekend's Andy Hully



sent us the following message: "We wanted to say **THANK YOU** to all of the residents who supported our runners as they went through Simpson and Ashland, making the day very special. Feedback has been great and we think that this year's route was the best we've ever had. Mark your calendars for 4-5 May 2025, Bank Holiday weekend. Entry is now open! Head over to [mkmarathon.com](http://mkmarathon.com) to secure your place on the start line in 2025."

The Redway Runners also hosted their annual MK24 Midsummer run in June at The Caldecotte Xperience. In its



fifth year, the event has proven to be a great success and this year is the first time at Caldecotte, having outgrown the previous location at Willen Lake, due to its popularity. The route is a 6.66 mile (just over 10-kilometre) lap, taking in the whole of Caldecotte Lake, around the OU's Walton Hall campus and back along the Ouzel Valley, crossing Simpson Road at two points. Participants can run or walk at their own pace and the idea is to do as many (or as few) laps of the route within the 24hr period. The event provides camping facilities/resting areas, as well as food and drinks to energise the keen participants. All proceeds this year will go to the Redway Runner's chosen charity, Action 4 Youth.

● Gary Howard



FRIENDS OF ASHLAND LAKESIDE PRESENT

## BINGO NIGHT

SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER  
5-7 PM

**£10 PER FAMILY (UP TO 5 PEOPLE)**

Bring your own food/drink (no nuts)  
Ashland Lakeside Community Centre  
Tickets available via DM to the Ashland Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page or please email [clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk)  
Proceeds from ticket sales to support future events

## ASHLAND LAKESIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Available To Hire

Facilities include an accessible toilet, wifi, kitchenette and free parking.

For more information and online booking:

- [www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk/ashland-lakeside](http://www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk/ashland-lakeside)
- [simpsonashlandhalls@gmail.com](mailto:simpsonashlandhalls@gmail.com)
- Ashland Lakeside, Peshurst Crescent, Ashland, MK6 4AJ

**HOURLY HIRE RATE**

- £20 standard rate
- £15 for charities
- £12.50 for residents of Simpson and Ashland

## More advice on offer

Following positive feedback on the drop-in sessions run by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in January and February, the Parish Council has decided to continue to fund the provision, in partnership with neighbouring Old Woughton Parish Council.

The venue for the next session is **Ashland Lakeside** (MK6 4AJ; What3words: start.quenched.vine) on **Friday 12 July from 12.00 to 3.00 p.m.** If you have things on your mind that you cannot resolve, pressures that you are finding it hard to deal with, or a need for information and support that you are struggling to identify, why not call by and talk to an experienced listening ear who can help you find ways forward. The advice sessions are free to residents of Ashland, Simpson and Old Woughton parish. Booking not required.

A further session is planned for **Friday 11 October from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.** at St Mary's Church, Woughton on the Green.

Friday 12th July

12:00pm - 3:00pm

Ashland Lakeside Centre

### Need advice?

citizens advice Milton Keynes

If you live in Simpson, Ashland or Old Woughton Parish and you need advice, you can drop in and see one of our Advisers on the dates below.

Friday 12th July 2024

The session will take place at:  
Ashland Lakeside Centre  
12:00pm - 3:00pm

- There's no need to make an appointment.
- Just drop in between the times advertised and an Adviser will see you as soon as possible.
- If the Adviser is busy there may be a short wait.

The service is for residents only and is funded by both Old Woughton and Simpson & Ashland Parish Councils

### SKILLS ON A SATURDAY

Celebrating Skills & Knowledge in Our Community

Our thanks to everyone who came along to support the first three sessions - Demonstrating local craft skills, Singing for everyone and Village in a city (local history).

After a summer break, we will restart the programme in September, so please put these dates in your diary:

**Saturday 7 September - Family history workshop**  
**Saturday 26 October - Repair, Restore, Upcycle**  
**Saturday 7 December - details to follow**

All sessions are in Simpson Village Hall, 2.00 - 4.00 p.m.  
Free, including refreshments

● Friends of the Village Hall



Junction 14 choir at April's Singing for everyone session

## Family Coffee & Craft

**Schedule**  
Every Thursday in August

**Time**  
From 10:00 - 12:30

**Location**  
Ashland Lakeside Community Centre, Peshurst Crescent, Ashland, MK6 4AJ

Everyone welcome  
No booking required

**Funded by:**  
Simpson & Ashland

**Contact Us** [clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk) [www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk](http://www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk)

# Simpson Garden Group news

When the Garden Group was formed, thirteen years ago, money was raised for two trees to be planted in the Parish, one in Simpson one in Ashland.

In 2013, a Nordmann Fir was planted near the church in Simpson. It has become a focal point at Christmas, when it is festooned with lights and decorations. It has also been decorated with knitted flowers and poppies, made by Simpson residents, during anniversaries including the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II and the anniversary of the end of World War 2. Snowdrop bulbs have been planted round the tree in memory of members of the group who have passed away.

The Ashland tree has taken a longer to be realised, but last February a lime tree was planted, following discussions with local residents and the Parks Trust. The tree was planted near Ashland Lakeside Community Centre and is in keeping with the local area. Both trees are looked after by local residents, for which we are very grateful.

The Garden Group has organised two talks for later this year, both in



February

Simpson Village Hall. They start at 8.00 p.m. and are open to all. Non-members £5.00. Put the dates in your diary ....

**Tuesday 10 September - The Woburn Abbey Gardens.** Speaker: Martin Towsey (Woburn Abbey Estate Garden Manager).

● Jane Anderson



June

**Tuesday 8 October - Re-inventing the garden border.** Speaker: Chris Day (Buckingham Nurseries).

# Electra launches new food cruises

With summer on its way, the volunteers running the all-electric community boat on the Grand Union Canal have announced two new food cruises for 2024: a **Sunday Brunch Chill-Out Cruise**, with light brunch items supplied fresh by The Game Changer Kitchen in Giffard Park, together with a **Midsummer Mezes Early Evening Cruise** on Thursdays.

These cruises take you from the newest canal bridge and wharf in Milton Keynes to the oldest, where a canal 'arm' once linked Newport Pagnell.

Additionally, we are introducing a midweek, one-way cruise from Great Linford Manor Park to the *Warbler on the Wharf* at Campbell Wharf, leaving at 6.00 p.m. The on-board Café Bar will be open for the 80-minute journey, arriving in time for drinks or dinner at the pub or in the city centre.

Popular favourites are also back on the menu, with early Friday evening Fish & Bubbles cruises, with Moore's award-



Sunday Brunch

winning cod & chips on board, plus a glass of prosecco as the sun starts to set over the water. Coffee & Cake cruises and Cream Tea Cruises run twice a week through the summer.

Watch the world go by through the large picture windows - which bring you eye to eye with the swans - or stand in the bow area to take photos of a



Midsummer Meze

memorable trip. The boat can carry up to 12 guests; with lavatory provision and access lift for standard size wheelchairs.

To book, go to [www.bmkwaterway.org/electra](http://www.bmkwaterway.org/electra)

● James Clifton, B&MK Waterway Trust  
james.clifton@bmkwaterway.org

# Democracy in Action

## Your Parish Councillors

Simpson and Ashland Parish Council qualifies for a total of eight councillors – three for Simpson ward and five for Ashland ward (in proportion to the population). By the deadline before the 2 May elections five residents had been nominated – all of whom were already serving on the council. All five live in Simpson, but two were nominated for Ashland. There was, therefore, no need for an election, all five being returned, unopposed.

David Pye resigned from the PC at the end of May (see right), so now there are just four councillors:

- **Peter Barnes** peter.barnes@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk
- **Rachelle Dalgarno** rachelle.dalgarno@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk
- **Chichi Ezeh** chichi.ezeh@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk
- **David Tucker** david.tucker@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk

At a meeting on 24 June, Peter Barnes was elected as Chair for 2024-25.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, please contact one of the current members or the Parish Clerk [clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk) for more information.

## Your Milton Keynes City Council ward councillors

Simpson and Ashland are situated in the Campbell Park and Old Woughton ward of Milton Keynes City Council. The ward is represented by three councillors, and on 2 May one of those seats was up for election. Graham Eaton (Liberal Democrat) gained 1263 votes, defeating Charlotte Hall, the Conservative Party candidate, by a margin of 156 votes. We are, therefore, now represented by three Liberal Democrat councillors:

- **Graham Eaton** graham.eaton@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- **Paul Trendall** paul.trendall@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- **Nana Oguntola** nana.oguntola@milton-keynes.gov.uk

● Katherine Harmsworth (Clerk)

## A Geography Trip to Simpson Village

The year 6s from Charles Warren Academy had a spectacular time on Tuesday 4 June, exploring Simpson Village, meeting local residents, finding out about the local history and completing a 'land use' survey of the area.

Residents young and old, including 102-year-old Mrs. Campbell, talked to the children about their memories of Simpson Village and the community they live in.

*'Interviewing the residents of The Mount was a nice experience. I enjoyed talking to them about Simpson Village,'* said Zara.

*'The trip was very enriching, I loved spending time with the ladies and gentlemen at The Mount,'* said Arthur.

David Grindley and his colleagues very kindly told us about some of the architecture in and around Simpson and showed us some of the amazing

plans and scaled models which adorn their office, inspiring many future architects. Peter Barnes shared his extensive knowledge and painted many visual pictures of Simpson in the past.

*Zeke said, 'what a great day, meeting the architects who designed Walton High's Post 16 building was surprising and very enjoyable.'*

*'I love history and wanted to find out even more,'* said Anna.

Thankfully, the weather was kind and we all enjoyed walking around this wonderful village and spotting many other interesting things. In particular, we loved the mistletoe balls in the tree tops, the fox on a thatched roof and exploring the church yard; finding out about the people who are buried there. Next steps... to create an 'I spy with my little eye in Simpson...' What do you think?

# Thank yous...

## DAVID PYE

After twelve years as a Parish Councillor – the past ten of them as Chair – David Pye has decided to step away to allow more time for his working life and the many other responsibilities of the voluntary activities in which he is engaged. It is unsurprising that his professional skills and knowledge are much in demand, and Simpson and Ashland is extremely fortunate to have had enjoyed the benefit of them for so long.

David has been tireless in pursuing the interests of local residents and local services. Over the time in which Ashland has grown as an estate, he has been a robust voice in dealing with the developers and other agencies. He was a driving force in the creation of Ashland Lakeside Community Centre and provided a strong and informed lead when difficult decisions were required. David has provided a very effective hand on the tiller and steered the parish through some sometimes choppy waters. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on.

We thank David for his years of service to Simpson and Ashland and are reassured that he will still be around to provide a listening ear.

## CHARLOTTE HALL

Charlotte Hall has been one of the three Councillors who represent Simpson and Ashland within the Campbell Park and Old Woughton ward of Milton Keynes City Council. She was elected in 2021, but lost her seat to Graham Eaton (Lib Dem) in the May elections.

During her time as a councillor, Charlotte has done an excellent job of representing the interests of local residents. She has been actively involved in the work of the Parish Council and been very supportive on planning matters, traffic, championing the number 18 bus service, and the development of Ashland Lakeside, in particular. On several occasions she used her knowledge of and contacts within MKCC to excellent effect to make progress with matters that would otherwise have stalled. Always approachable and responsive, Charlotte has also helped residents with individual issues, in a discreet and caring way.

Charlotte's service to our community has been exemplary and deserves every thanks. We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with her in her role of Chair of Old Woughton Parish Council – our neighbour to the north.

● Peter Barnes

# Quizzes

Many thanks to those who attend the regular quizzes and suppers, either in Simpson Village Hall or St Thomas's Church. Thousands of pounds have been raised already this year for a variety of charities, causes and the food bank. If you have a charity you would like to raise funds for, please let me know for next year. It will require some help on your part.

Here are the remaining dates for this year, if you want to join us. Your place HAS to be booked via me – missquiz@sky.com The evening starts at 7.00pm with the chosen supper (optional) and finishes around 10.00pm.

- 13 July Tinkers Bridge Community Fridge
- 27 July SUDC – Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood
- 31 Aug Soroptimists
- 7 Sept Angel Tree
- 12 Oct Camphill Communities
- 26 Oct R.N.L.I.
- 23 Nov Movember
- 7 Dec St Thomas's Church funds

If quizzes are not your thing, we are always grateful for money donations for the nominated charities or raffle prizes which help to raise funds

Thank you.

● Pat Hodges missquiz@sky.com

# Just Reward

Pat Hodges will be familiar to many local residents through the quizzes and concerts that she organises. Since 2011, she has raised over £150,000 for ninety-one different charities. The main aim of the over-300 events has been to fund raise, but Pat has always focussed on using the occasions to build a community spirit and foster social openings for those who may otherwise spend an evening at home and not have shared a meal with another person for a long while. During the Covid lockdown, she created over one hundred email quizzes to keep people connected and communicating with each other.

One of the beneficiaries of Pat's activities has been the Milton Keynes Soroptimists. In the course of six quizzes, since 2016, nearly £3000 has been raised for the group. Soroptimism - the best for women and girls - is a 100-year-old, international movement helping women and girls achieve their true potential. In MK, you may bump into them fundraising for MK ACT; the YMCA; Works for Us; the night shelter; or the Ukraine Appeal. If you would like to know more about the group's local activities please visit <https://sigbi.org/milton-keynes/> or speak with Vanessa Gwynn on 01908 665285.

On 6 March, International Women's Day, the Soroptimists recognised Pat's achievements with a table for two for her and her husband, Neil, at Prezzo. Sue Key, Chair of MK Soroptimists (and former Clerk of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council), presented Pat with the award and a bouquet.



Pat Hodges (right) and Sue Key

# News from St. Thomas' Church

When Rev. Nicola Vidamour told the members of St Thomas' Church that she had been offered a new job, we were obviously very sad. However, we all wished her well.

On 1 May she took up her new appointment as Director of Reflective Pastoral Supervision for Wesley House, Cambridge.

Her last service with us was the Sunday 29 April. She led a wonderful service and was presented with a suitcase and a voucher.

On 12 May, twenty-two of us travelled to Cambridge by minibus to attend a lovely welcome service at Wesley Church, followed by tea at Wesley House. We enjoyed a wonderful afternoon which has many great memories for us.

Rev. Ian Herbert has agreed to celebrate Holy Communion at St Thomas'

Church on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. All our Sunday services now commence at 11.15 a.m. and with the support of local preachers our weekly worship continues.

The Quinquennial inspection has been carried out by our architect. We are now waiting for someone from the Building Department at Oxford Diocese to visit and advise as to the best way forward to manage some of the building's needs.

On Sunday 30 June there is no Morning worship in Church. In the afternoon, at 3.00, there will be a celebration of Nicola's ministry at St Thomas Church. Members of the Woughton Ecumenical partnership, local churches and the village are invited.



Rev. Nicola Vidamour

● Iola Samuels (Church Warden)

## 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**.  
For further information and to book, go to [www.beingwellholistichealth.com/book-online](http://www.beingwellholistichealth.com/book-online)

## Evergreen Yoyalates

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...

S&A CALENDAR

2024

An overview of upcoming events around the parish...

**PLEASE NOTE:** Quizzes in Simpson Village Hall – places **MUST** be booked with [missquiz@sky.com](mailto:missquiz@sky.com) or 01908 644785.

## JULY

- **Monday 1st** Parish Council Meeting, Simpson Village Hall, 8.00-10.00 p.m. All welcome.
- **Thursday 4th** General Election – polling stations at Simpson Village Hall and Ashland Lakeside, open from 07.00 to 22.00.
- **Wednesday 10th** *Mushrooms and fungi from around historic Woughton*, talk by Justin Long at St Mary's Church, Woughton on the Green. 7.30 p.m. £2.00.
- **Friday 12th** Citizens' Advice Bureau drop-in session, Ashland Lakeside 12.00 – 3.00 p.m.
- **Saturday 13th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for Tinkers Bridge Community Fridge.
- **Saturday 27th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC).

## AUGUST

- **Thursday 1st** Coffee & Craft at Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m. All welcome.
- **Wednesday 7th** Family litter pick from Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. For details see [www.theparkstrust.com/events/](http://www.theparkstrust.com/events/)
- **Wednesday 7th** Parkland Play from ASHLAND Lakeside 12.00-3.00 p.m. For details see [www.theparkstrust.com/events/](http://www.theparkstrust.com/events/)
- **Thursday 8th** Coffee & Craft at Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m. All welcome.
- **Thursday 15th** Coffee & Craft at Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m. All welcome.
- **Thursday 22nd** Coffee & Craft at Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m. All welcome.
- **Thursday 29th** Coffee & Craft at Ashland Lakeside, 10.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m. All welcome.
- **Saturday 31st** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for the Soroptimists.

## SEPTEMBER

- **Saturday 7th** Skills on a Saturday – Family History workshop, Simpson Village Hall, 2.00-4.00 p.m. Free.
- **Saturday 7th** Bingo Night, Ashland Lakeside, 5.00-7.00 p.m.
- **Saturday 7th** Quiz in St Thomas' Church, Simpson at 7.00 p.m., for Angel Tree.
- **Tuesday 10th** *The Woburn Abbey Gardens*. Simpson Garden Group talk by Martin Towsey (Woburn Abbey Estate Garden Manager). Simpson Village Hall at 8.00 p.m. £5.00 for non-members.
- **Tuesday 17th** Discovery stroll at Ashland Lakes, 2.00-3.00/3.30. For details see [www.theparkstrust.com/events/](http://www.theparkstrust.com/events/)
- **Sunday 22nd** Accessible Guided Walk at Ashland Lakes 11.00-11.45. For details see [www.theparkstrust.com/events/](http://www.theparkstrust.com/events/)



### 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](http://www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk)  
[clerk@simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk](mailto: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, Charles Warren Academy, James Clifton, Katherine Harmsworth, Pat Hodges, Gary Howard, Sian Lewis, Iola Samuels, Caroline Vooght and Amanda Weaver.

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