



Parish Newsletter

September 2025

MK Heritage Open Days

MK Heritage Open Days is back again, from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 September. There is something for everyone as MK celebrates our fascinating heritage with a packed programme of over 250 family events. You can take a trip on the *Electra* canal boat, learn about our open spaces with The Parks Trust, take a guided bike ride through the city, enjoy craft workshops, visit a medieval fayre, explore a museum dedicated to all things Lego, find out about bees and above all have fun, share quality time and make some memories. All events are **free** to attend.

This year's theme is Architecture – 109 events across the city make the most of MK's architectural legacy, from ancient churches and farm buildings to the modernist marble-and-glass buildings that form the fabric of our city.

Close to home

Within walking distance of Simpson and Ashland, why not explore **Open House at Grindley Architects** at 7 Lissel Road, Simpson and view models and drawings of their projects around the MK area – including their own office, designed and constructed in 2005. Saturdays 13 and 20 September from 11.00 to 15.30. Pre-booking is not required but advance notice is welcome: info@grindleyarchitects.co.uk or 01908 668919.

The Open University is hosting several events in the Betty Boothroyd



Walton Hall, The Open University



Open House at Grindley Architects, Lissel Road, Simpson

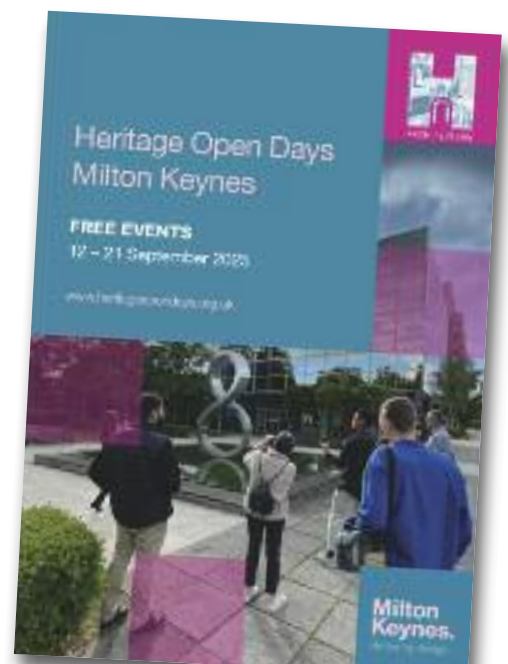
Library on the Walton Hall campus, including historical displays from the archives, on Wednesday 17, Thursday 18 and Friday 19, 10.30-15.30. Within the programme are timed screenings of historical OU films covering three themes: Teaching & Learning at the OU, OU Historical Events, and Milton Keynes & the Walton Hall estate. A further feature is a 90-minute guided tour of the campus with the University Archivist, Ruth Cammies (17th 12.00 and 13.00; 18th 10.30; 19th 10.30 and 14.30). Pre-booking is required: **01908 653378**. To add to the mix, the OU's Open Voices Choir will be performing in the Library from 12.00 to 13.00 on Thursday 18th – no booking required.

Simpson buildings will feature – albeit briefly – in **10 People: 10 Buildings: 10 Minutes** on Wednesday 17th 19.00-21.00 at the City Discovery Centre, Bradwell Abbey MK13 9AP. In the course of what is billed as 'a lively fun-filled evening', Peter Barnes is contributing a 10 minute whistle-stop tour of 10 Simpson buildings, from the old school to The Mount. Will he make it to the final destination before being gonged out? Pre-booking required via

www.miltonkeynesforum.org

The HOD brochure is available from Milton Keynes libraries and Get Smart carousels in local supermarkets. The programme is online at www.livingarchive.org.uk/events/category/events

● Mel Jeavons



Join the Dotts ... E-scooter and e-bike parking

Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) are working with bike and scooter operators, Dott and Lime to expand dedicated geofenced parking bays across Milton Keynes.

MKCC acknowledges the nuisance caused by inconsiderately placed e-scooters and bikes. The move towards geofenced parking areas for e-hire vehicles is designed to ensure that they are not abandoned in the 'public realm', causing obstruction and looking untidy, at the same time as remaining attractive, viable means of transport for many.

The geofenced parking areas will become the **only** places where hires can start and end. This should make a significant difference across MK, if these parking areas are sited sensibly.

Phase 1 of the project has focussed on Central Milton Keynes. Designated parking areas have resulted in a marked difference in how the vehicles are parked there.

MKCC now wishes to work with parish and town councils to establish further designated, geofenced parking areas across the city. Operators have proposed locations, based on trip end points over the last 6 months and integrating with existing transport networks (e.g. bus stops) and avoiding Redways and footpaths.

It is acknowledged that some of these locations may not be suitable; if so, they can easily be moved or removed. There may be other areas that would be ideal for parking, and these can easily be added.

The pinpoints on the map give an approximate location of the intended parking.

In due course, locations will be marked out on the operators' apps, and may be marked on the ground where necessary. They will be enforced using GPS technology and mandatory end-trip photos. Users who park bikes/scooters obstructively will be warned and then fined. Patrols will visit each location to tidy



vehicles, periodically.

Simpson and Ashland PC has logged a wish to participate in the consultation, while noting that the first two weeks of August is hardly a sufficient time! We are reassured that changes can be made, and problematic areas investigated by the operators at any time. There will be discussion at the Parish Council meeting on 15 September.

Local Running Update

It's been a busy Summer for running events, both locally and across MK, starting with the MK Marathon on 5 May, which ran through Simpson and Ashland. It was great to see so many local people coming out to support the runners. Then in June, the Caldecotte Xperience hosted the MK24 Midsummer event with the Redway Runners. It was a tad warm, but the event was a sell out and everyone enjoyed the festival feel of the "event like no other". It will be returning in June 2026.

In July, just down the road, was the Furzton Relay, another hugely successful annual event in beautiful lakeside settings, with teams of four competing around a 2.5 mile route. Then August saw Beat the Barge up at Linford Manor Grounds – a novelty 5-mile race against the clock (and a barge) along the Grand Union Canal, avoiding water guns along the way.

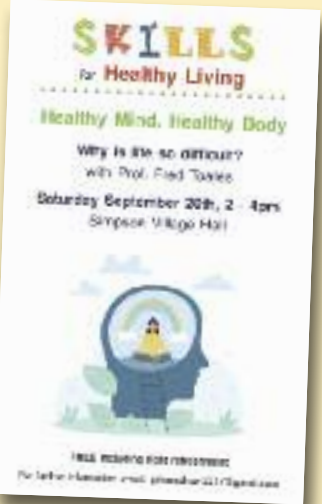
As autumn approaches, our local club, the **Redway Runners**, will be starting its beginner's groups (see the poster for details). Membership at just £5 a year is great value for money and anyone can join, regardless of age or ability.

Finally, a mention for Enigma Running who organise regular events on our doorstep at Caldecotte Lake. In September is the Coronation Scot railway run; October the Back to the Future 40th Anniversary run; November the Fireworks run; and a few events in December including the Gremlins Déjà Vu marathon and Die Hard Christmas marathon. All events are very reasonably priced and the quality of the medals is second to none.

Gary Howard

Skills for Healthy Living

Please put the dates in your diary for the two remaining events in the Skills for Healthy Living series, at Simpson Village Hall. On Saturday 20 September the focus is on **Healthy Mind, Healthy Body**. We are delighted to have an expert speaker on the subject - Fred Toates (Emeritus Professor at the Open University) who will address the question 'Why is life so difficult?' As usual, there will be plenty of time for discussion and refreshments.



The October event on Saturday 18th is titled **Keeping Connected**. We know from research and from experience that social isolation is a major cause of ill health in older age. In this session we hope to share and celebrate the myriad ways we can meet people and be socially active in Milton Keynes. You might like to share the group or activity that has helped you connect with others - or just come along and listen.

Both sessions are from 2.00 to 4.00 and are **free**.

Gill Needham

Next door neighbours to be



In early July, development finally started on the ground on the site to the south of H9 Groveway and east of the River Ouzel that will become the **Walton Manor** estate. Work is continuing apace and some of the infrastructure is visible from the perimeter path and Simpson Road, including the base of one of the access roads. As the plan indicates, traffic to



and from the southern third of the estate will enter/exit to and from Simpson Road. The northern two thirds will leave and enter via the Walton Drive roundabout on H9 Groveway. Once occupied, the new arrivals will not be the first settlers, there. In January and February, before building



work began, there was an archaeological dig in the top north-west corner of the site, where previous research had found indications of a possible Iron Age settlement, perhaps dating from around 500 BCE. A small team from Oxford Archaeology carried out the excavations which, we understand, have uncovered further evidence of a settlement. We are in discussion with Oxford Archaeology about the prospect of a talk and display in early 2026. Look out for more information.

● Peter Barnes



ASHLAND LAKESIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Available To Hire

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

HOURLY HIRE RATE

- £25 standard rate
- £15 for charities
- £12.50 for residents of Simpson and Ashland

For more information and online booking:

www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk/ashland-lakeside

simpsonashlandhalls@gmail.com

Ashland Lakeside, Penshurst Crescent, Ashland, MK6 4AJ

News from St Thomas' Church

Our congregation remains vibrant and busy. In the last few months there have been four weddings and a baptism. We have been fortunate to welcome new members who take an active part in church life.

People continue to visit our churchyard in respect for their loved ones. The churchyard is very well maintained by our volunteer gardener.

We now host refreshments for two Walkers' Groups, one local and the other from Whaddon. People really appreciate the beauty of our church

The cracks in the chancel walls are being monitored; we now must wait and see what effect winter will have on the chancel.

Quizzes and concerts continue to provide excellent entertainment for

members and visitors, at the same time as raising funds. The next quiz is on Saturday 13 September, at 7.00 pm, in aid of the Soroptimists. Places must be booked with Pat Hodges (missquiz@sky.com)

The Bishop of Buckingham, the Right Revd Dave Bull, is leading worship at Trinity Church Fishermead on Sunday 31 August. Members of our congregation will be attending the service.

We will be celebrating Harvest Festival on Sunday 12 October at the 11.15am service. The church will be decorated and items of non-perishable foods will be donated to the Food Bank. Everyone is welcome.

● Iola Samuels – Church Warden



More advice on offer

The drop-in sessions run by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) on behalf of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council and our neighbours, Old Woughton Parish Council, continue to provide a much-appreciated service for local residents. There will be another opportunity to benefit from CAB advice on **Friday 10 October from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at St Mary's Church, Woughton on the Green.**

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.

There will be a further session at **Simpson Village Hall** on **Friday 23 January 2026** (11.00-2.00).

Parish Council meeting

Simpson and Ashland Parish Council meets, formally, every two months, alternating between Ashland Lakeside and Simpson Village Hall. The meetings are open to residents of Ashland and Simpson, and they begin with a Public Forum where you can raise questions and matters of concern. The Agenda will appear on the Parish website www.simpsonashland-pc.gov.uk/document-category/agendas

The next meeting is on **Monday 15 September at 8.00** in Simpson Village Hall.

Advice Sessions

For residents of Simpson, Ashland and Old Woughton

Citizens Advice Milton Keynes is working with both Simpson & Ashland and Old Woughton Parish Councils to provide advice surgeries for local residents. Our advice is free, impartial and **confidential**.

See below for details of when and where we'll be in the area:

11th Jul 2025: Ashland Lakeside	11am - 2pm
10th Oct 2025: St Mary's Church	10am - 1pm
23rd Jan 2026: Simpson Village Hall	11am - 2pm
17th Apr 2026: St Mary's Church	10am - 1pm

We can advise you on a range of problems including:

- Debt and Money Issues
- Benefits and Universal Credit
- Housing and Homelessness
- Work and Employment
- Family Law
- Immigration
- Consumer Problems

citizens advice Milton Keynes

Coming to a Community Hall near you

Over the course of the summer, a review of the facilities at Ashland Lakeside has led to alterations, repairs and improvements which will benefit users. The most wide-reaching is the on-going installation of a replacement radiator-based heating

system, which will be more efficient and effective. Proposals are also under consideration to replace the entrance door and re-purpose the space immediately inside. Security is also being improved at both

Ashland Lakeside, where the external camera has been repositioned and at Simpson Village Hall, where cameras are being installed.

● **Colin Harmsworth**
(Facilities Manager)

Regular events

Ashland Lakeside: **Monday 6.15 – 7.15 pm** Yoga www.beingwellholistichealth.com/
Tuesday 10.00 – 11.00 am Yoga <https://mku3a.org/>
Alternate Wednesdays 10.30 – 12.30 Home Educators Group
Thursday 5.00 – 7.00 pm Children’s Drama Classes www.amberelphant.co.uk/
Thursday 7.30 – 8.30 pm Italian Lessons

Simpson Village Hall: **Monday 7.00 – 8.00 pm** Table Tennis
Tuesday 5.30 – 6.30pm Yogalates - **Shakila 07388 023175**
Wednesday 10.30 – 11.30am Chair Exercise - **Shakila 07388 023175**

Nature Corner

We are fortunate to live in an area of Milton Keynes which is rich with wildlife in easy reach – birds in gardens and on and around Ashland Lakes, Caldecotte Lake and the Ousel Valley Park; and foxes, grey squirrels and hedgehogs. Some species are with us all the year round; others are summer or winter visitors. The latter include Wigeon, a duck which arrives at Ashland in the autumn, travelling all the way from Siberia.

And there are some more ‘exotic’ recent sightings within the mix. Janice Robertson is a Milton Keynes naturalist who conducts a monthly count of Ashland Lakes’ birdlife, on behalf of the British Trust for Ornithology. During a visit on 16 July she spotted a Mediterranean Gull, readily distinguished from the resident Black-



headed Gulls by its much blacker head and thick red bill, both features evident in Janice’s photograph. She read the number on the ring on the bird’s leg and was able to trace its history.

Ringed as a chick in Leipzig, Germany, in June 2018, the gull has found its way to the Milton Keynes area, on and off, since November 2019, when it was recorded in Newton Lees. Since then, it’s been spotted at Willen Lake North (2021) and Mount

Farm Lake (2022; 2024). Prior to its recent appearance in Ashland, it was last recorded in the Netherlands in April.

Simpson resident Rebecca Hiorns has a trail camera in her Lissel Road garden, which is activated by the movement of nighttime wildlife. At 03.30 on Thursday 21 August the camera captured what appears to be a polecat. Rebecca is currently researching her sighting. Have you seen anything of the sort, or evidence of its possible activity? Information is available at www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/polecat

● **Peter Barnes**



Litter picking blues...

Saturday 12 July was a hot day – well, when wasn’t? – but that didn’t deter the intrepid few in Ashland and Simpson who turned out to pick up litter from the public spaces in their respective parts of the parish. The Ashland crew won the ‘best dressed for the task’ competition. We were all very grateful for the refreshing chilled drinks kindly donated by Parish Councillor Vince Biswas.

Several sacks were filled with drink cans, plastic and glass bottles, food packaging and assorted discarded rubbish. As on past picks, there were notable concentrations in the vicinity of Charles Warren Academy and along the canal towpath.

Thanks to all who participated, to the Parks Trust volunteers who regularly gather litter from around Ashland Lakes, and to Milton Keynes City Council’s street cleansing team.

● **Peter Barnes**



Bin it...



If you are a dog walker – or even if you walk without a dog – you will have noticed the recent appearance of shiny new dog waste bins in Ashland and Simpson. All eight of the previous ones – 10 years old and more – have been replaced by Marcus Young Landscapes, who the Parish Council contracts to empty the bins, regularly.

If you spot an overflowing bin or if you have suggestions for a strategically placed additional bin, please email the Parish Clerk.

Quizzes and concerts

Up until August, £12,837 has been raised in 2025 for various charities and St Thomas’ Church funds. Many thanks to everyone who supports our quiz nights and concerts. As well as village and church folk, these events are supported by friends and family and others who hear about them. The money raised also helps run Simpson Village Hall and St Thomas’ Church.

Along with the quiz nights and concerts, we have included asking for donations for the MK Food Bank, a collection for the Myanmar Earthquake Disaster and the Gaza Famine Appeal. We also remembered Shirley Coulson, who attended and supported many quiz nights, who died last year.

Many thanks to everyone who supports our communal fund raising – and as well as attending the events, thanks to those who donate raffle prizes and give donations. For the rest of our events this year, please see the What’s on listing on page 8.

● **Pat Hodges**

Simpson War memorial



In June 2022, the faded names inscribed on the war memorial were repainted by H.W.Mason & Sons. However, the black surface deteriorated over a short period of time until, by earlier this year names were indecipherable. Masons agreed to rectify the problem and in June the granite tablet was restored to its former glory, shortly after the 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

What's On...

An overview of upcoming events around the parish...



PLEASE NOTE: Quizzes in Simpson Village Hall **MUST** be booked with missquiz@sky.com or 01908 644785. Veggie options for the food.

SEPTEMBER

- **Saturday 13th** Quiz in St Thomas' Church at 7.00 p.m. in aid of the Soroptimists.
- **Monday 15th** Parish Council Meeting at Simpson Village Hall. 8.00 p.m.
- **Saturday 20th** Skills for Healthy Living. Healthy Mind, Healthy Body – 'Why is life so difficult?' Prof Fred Toates. Simpson Village Hall, 2.00 – 4.00. Free.

OCTOBER

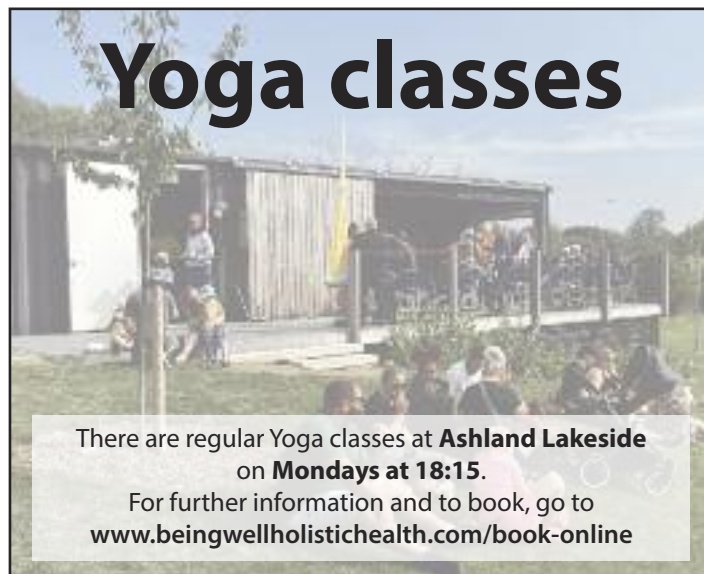
- **Friday 10th** Citizens Advice Bureau open session, St Mary's Church, Woughton on the Green 10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.
- **Saturday 11th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for the RNLI.
- **Sunday 12th** Harvest Festival at the 11.15am service at St Thomas' Church. All welcome.
- **Saturday 18th** Skills for Healthy Living. Keeping Connected. Simpson Village Hall, 2.00 – 4.00. Free.
- **Saturday 18th** Concert at St Thomas' Church at 7.00 p.m. "Autumn Leaves are Falling".
- **Saturday 25th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for the RSPCA.

NOVEMBER

- **Saturday 15th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for Tinkers Bridge Community Larder.
- **Saturday 29th** Quiz in Simpson Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. for Healing Hands.

DECEMBER

- **Saturday 13th** Christmas Concert in St Thomas' Church at 7.00 p.m.
- **Friday 19th** Salvation Army Carols in St Thomas' Church at 7.00 p.m.



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



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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07597 304 054 Twitter: @SimpsonAshland

This issue of the parish newsletter has been edited by: Peter Barnes and Dylan Jeavons.
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The newsletter is printed by Prontaprint, 16 & 17 Darin Court, Crownhill, MK8 0AD



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