

THE Parishioner



St Mary's Church Ash Vale



roots down, walls down

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Office Hours Tues 11am-4pm, Thurs 10am-3pm

Parish Office Mobile: 9am-5pm

07863 311165

Sunday Morning 10am Services: On Zoom now & in Person after lockdown!

You are welcome to Zoom in to the Sunday Morning service at 10am; simply email the Parish Administrator to receive the link, or find us on Facebook @StMarysAshVale.

After lockdown ends you will also be able to attend in person, with extra measures to keep everyone safe. **On arrival please sign in or scan the QR code on your NHS app, use hand sanitiser, pop on your mask and go directly to your seat and remain seated.** We must not mingle, so as to protect all those attending. (Please stay away and use zoom if you have COVID-19 symptoms). **We look forward to welcoming you.**

Evensong Wednesdays 8pm

You can Zoom in to Evensong on Wednesday nights or join us in the car park. Email the Parish Administrator to join our mailing list and receive the link. Keep in touch as arrangements are always evolving!

Messy Church—See page 14 for details



- Jan: Home Kits
- Feb: Lost Sheep Trail
- March: Messy Lent
- April: Messy Easter

St Mary's Community Centre

- Large hall & kitchen
- Small hall & sink
- Wheelchair accessible toilet

Bookings: Please contact the Parish Administrator for news. We are following emerging Government and CofE guidance.

Ash Vale Chapel, Wharf Rd

(Joint project with H-SB Methodist Circuit)

Project Manager: 07730 609446

www.ashvalechapel.com

Parishioner Magazine Team

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During the Pandemic we are publishing mainly online, with paper copies on request. Please collect your copy at St Mary's or text us: 077309 609446 www.ash-vale.org.uk

Plus... we are hugely grateful to a small army of willing volunteers who contribute, collate, publish, email, print, bundle and deliver The Parishioner to all our readers!



Letter from the Vicarage

By Revd. Neil Lambert at St Mary's

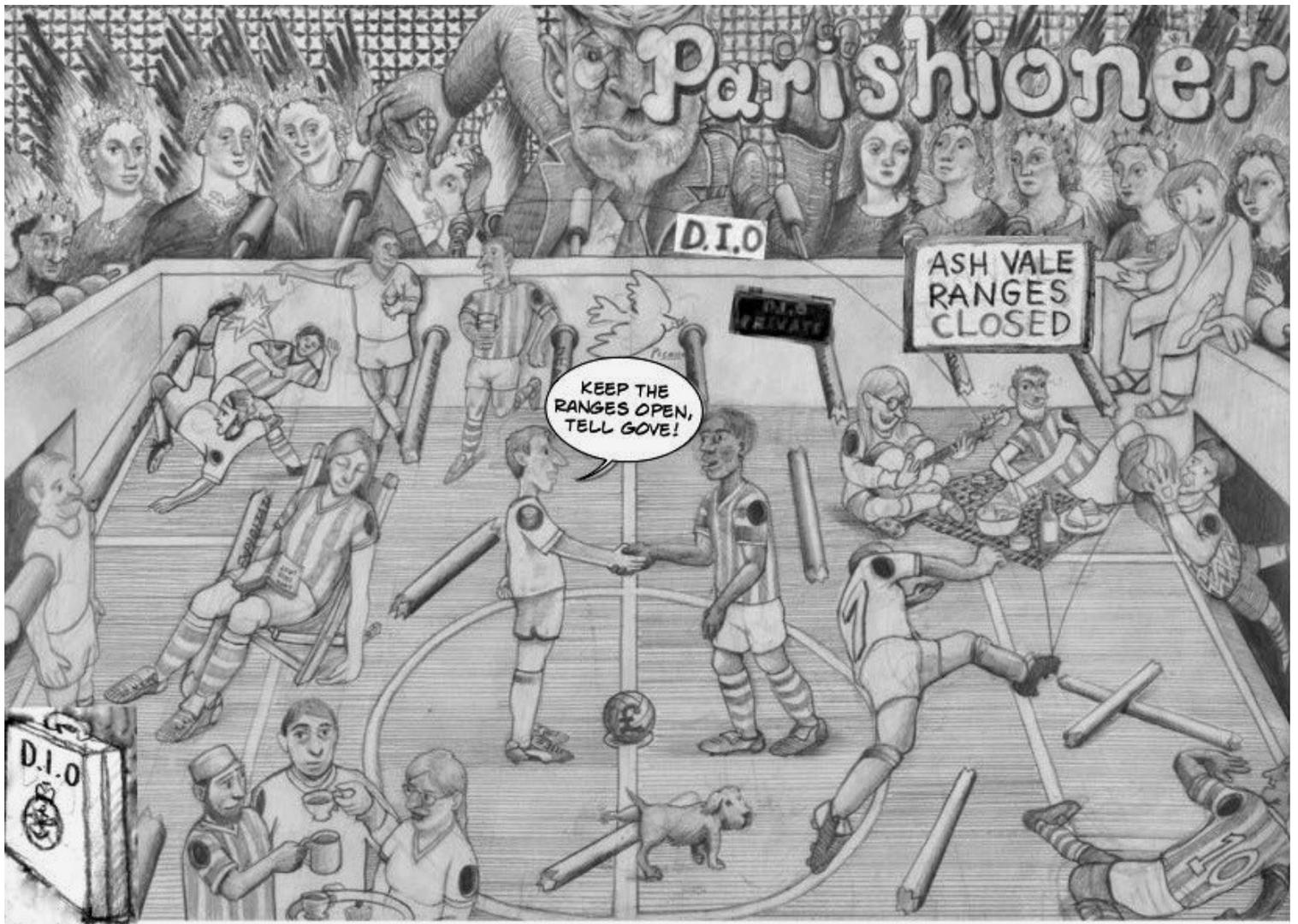
A Happy New Year to you all, and a blessing on you and yours.

As we face a new lock down and schools closing once again, I have been reflecting on what we can learn about successfully surviving a crisis. How are you coping with “Lockdown 3.0”? Have look at the ‘what’s on’ page if you are looking for opportunities to connect with like-minded locals.

Looking for best practise, my thoughts turn not only to recent times, but also to the challenges faced by past generations. You may remember Eric, one of our local heroes who shared his wisdom via a video on Remembrance Day at our carpark & zoom service. I learned so much from my visit to his doorstep last year. Here are 3 things to remember as we face the latest challenges in 2021:

- 1) Love your neighbour.** Our community has shown itself to be a caring, generous and faithful group of amazing neighbours over the last year. What an incredible village we live in! Local people have been tireless in volunteering via the Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group fetching shopping and prescriptions, and helping in many other ways. The Food Parcels project is incredible (more on that in later pages) and has been very well supported by your generosity. I have seen and heard many more examples of caring, encouraging and sharing going on informally too. Under pressure, stick together! We can get through this if we look after one another.
- 2) Say Safe.** Eric often tells us about London during the war, and how people took shelter in the nearest basement or designated ‘safe place’ when the sirens wailed. It was the obvious thing to do. Similarly we would be crazy not to follow the latest covid rules. Even at St Mary's we have taken the difficult decision to move services over to ‘zoom only’ on Sundays for January & February to keep each other safe. Keep on keeping each other safe, one day at a time, it's the right thing to do and it will save lives.
- 3) Keep the long term in mind.** We may just be taking one day at a time, but each step is part of a longer journey. To reach our long term goals in life, we need to look beyond today and consider what we want of the future. Whatever you dream of - ‘post covid’ family reunions perhaps, planting a garden, starting a new career, ending hunger, or tackling climate change, however big or small your dreams, you need to set your compass accordingly and make sure your daily direction of travel is aligned. Let's spend our days wisely and well, building relationships, making changes, learning skills. For Christians, this also means tapping in to what God has in store for us by deepening our faith and strengthening our relationship with Him.

More local to home, you will see that Ash Ranges, and by association defending democracy and due process is a hot topic for us in this issue of the Parishioner. You will find an Ash Ranges supplement in the centre pages, written from 3 different perspectives by locals who are at the forefront of this campaign. While we must leave the legal arguments to the experts, one thing is clear: We must ensure that we stand up for justice, give a voice to the voiceless, and hold our representatives to account.



We have all read in the history books how fragile democracy can be, and how quickly rights can be eroded. No overt attack is needed to undermine justice, merely apathy and a general reluctance to act in its defence. The recent events in the USA are a stark reminder that we get what we vote for. Let's hold our own representatives to account wherever they may be— Parish and County Councillors, Members of Parliament, and all those in authority. And remember to pray for them too.

With every blessing,

Neil

Get ready!

Lost Sheep Trail

Half Term 13-21 Feb



Put a sheep on display in your window, shop front or garden and let us know, so we can add you to the list, then use the list for a Sheep-spotting walk as part of your daily exercise in half term!

Sheep: If you're taking part by displaying a sheep please send us a note with your sheep's name and location, so we can put you on the trail map. You can draw a picture, create a window display, make a life sized sheep for your front lawn, paint a sheep on a rock or even craft a nifty little knitted number! Text Alex on 07730 609446 or message us on Facebook @StMarysAshVale

Trail Walkers: We will publish the Lost Sheep Trail on the St Mary's website & Facebook pages for everyone to enjoy in Half Term. We will adjust things to meet the rules on the day so keep an eye out for news! www.ash-vale.org.uk Facebook @StMarysAshVale #LostSheepTrail

To start you off, can you find all the sheep in this magazine?

PS -If you'd like to knit your sheep the Messy Church website has great pattern here:

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/pdf/Messy%20Nativity%20support%20material%202020.pdf>





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Food Parcels Team Update

By Carla Morson, Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group

I'm going to start by thanking all of our volunteers, whether they are part of the Food Parcels Team or not, as all have done so much to help our community over the past 10 months. Without everyone we would have been lost and unable to do much of what we have.



This time around I'd particularly like to focus on the work of our Food Parcels Team which is led by Alex Sanderson who is doing a fantastic job. We have a core team of around 20 volunteers helping out whenever/wherever they can, supermarket donation collections, packing and delivering to up to 30 families a week, although the norm is around 24 families. We were, until just before Christmas delivering twice a week however we have now, in view of the new variant of Covid-19, split our volunteers into 2 'crews' (their words) so that we can continue to operate should any of us contract coronavirus and one of the crews need to isolate.

To someone not aware of what's going on, when the 'crews' get moving it looks a bit chaotic as all are masked and keeping their distance, I have to say I'm full of admiration at the speed at which everyone works and the strange 'dance' that seems to happen as everybody avoids each other's space. It's definitely a sight to behold and done with such skill!

Getting ready to deliver the Christmas parcels was even more amazing, as thanks to the incredible generosity of our community there was so much food and so many gifts for the children, all of which were wrapped and delivered to



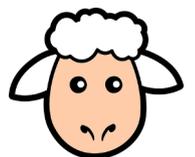
parents out of sight of the children so that we didn't take away from the magic of Father Christmas. We were also able to give gifts to the adults. Although much hard work involving many hours, was done by our volunteers, it is to the credit of our community as a whole that we were able to ensure that 29 families had a much, much better Christmas than they expected.



None of the above would have been achieved were it not for the help and generosity of those making donations, so in addition to thanking those who work tirelessly to get the food to where it is needed I'd also like to thank every single shop, business and person who has contributed on either a regular or ad hoc basis. You know who you are and from the bottom of hearts we thank you.

Carla

The Food Parcels Project is a joint project with The Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group & St Mary's Church. Store cupboard food items and toiletries are much appreciated, and can be left at St Mary's when it's open, and during lockdown please text us to arrange a drop off. 07730609446. If you would like to donate to help us please you can donate to St Mary's, donate funds online here: <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/7a47190c-ad4e-4cf9-8662-da844101a41c>
Thank you for your Support.





Meet the Local: John Tonks

At The Parishioner we love getting to know our neighbours!

Lovely to meet you John, tell us a little bit about yourself!

Hi, lovely to meet you also. I have been married to my wife Emily for 11 years and we have a young family keeping us on our toes. I enjoy socialising and am the kind of person that likes to keep busy. I like music, theatre, movies, and getting outside, especially when the sun is shining. I often help a local amateur

dramatics group based in Woking which is always great fun as it's totally different from my day job, but you certainly won't find me on stage! I am the Deputy Chairman of Ash Parish Council where I also serve as the Chairman of The Amenities, Finance and Administration Committee and the Events working group.

How long have you lived in the area / what brought you to Ash Vale.

I moved into Ash Vale in 2011 having grown up in Farnborough. I have always been local to the area. Although I mostly work from home, I do sometimes need to travel for work and having the excellent local transport links really helps. We also love the local green spaces and canal, and it's an ideal place to bring up our children.

What do you love about Ash Vale / what motivates you to be a parish councillor?

I did not overly appreciate it until I moved in, but I value the fact that we are still living in a village. We have a very strong community and I love that about Ash & Ash Vale. I have always been very community minded, and I feel that being a Parish Councillor is a good way for me to engage and help our community. There is no rule book on how to be a councillor but as each year passes, I feel my contribution is more valuable. I help organise several events within the village as part of the council working group. I love seeing people enjoy these events, however the event that makes me the proudest is seeing the ever-growing attendance for Remembrance Sunday. Whilst this was not

possible this last year, I know the community was there in spirit, and I felt a great sense of pride just being involved.

What do you do to relax?

I am one of those people that can't sit still. I like to keep busy and looking after our two young children certainly does that! I very much enjoy the local green spaces, such as our local parks, nature reserves and the Ash Ranges. I am deeply saddened by the closure of part of the ranges, as I'm sure we all are. My family has greatly enjoyed walking and learning to cycle in those areas over the years. Following the recent council meeting, members of the Parish Council and Save Ash Ranges Group agreed to write a letter to escalate the matter further. I am pleased to see everyone working together to Save Ash Ranges. When not out and about and once the kids are in bed, I like nothing better than a good movie with no distractions and to escape for an hour or two, however nothing quite beats a cup of tea standing outside enjoying the Ash Vale sunshine.

How has covid affected what you do?

I am an IT worker and have been working from home for almost nine years now so in that regard my home office has not changed. However, as I work in the health sector, it has been quite stressful, as you might imagine, but I find the work very rewarding and I know most workplaces will have been equally as stressful of late. Our oldest son is at school and the novelty of home-schooling has well and truly worn off as I am sure many would agree. My wife deserves the credit for home schooling, but I try and take a lesson or two a week as and when I am able. I do however feel we are spending more quality time as a family, and we are now closer to our neighbours than we have ever been. Our youngest was born 3 weeks into the first lock down in April 2020, so it has made us extremely cautious and we have spent a lot of time shielding. I am very grateful to have a garden to enjoy.

What are your hopes (or ambitions or goals) for 2021?

I am a glass half full kind of person and I wish to continue to make positive changes where possible. In that regard my hope for 2021 is to better manage my work / life balance and to do the small things well.

If you'd like to get in touch with John:

John.Tonks@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk 07754 679296

If you have a nomination for our next "meet the Local" please get in touch with The Parishioner on 07730 609446

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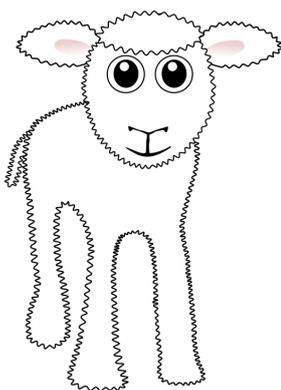
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New Year—New Toddler Group?

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Mondays 11am—Coffee chat for the grownups

Tuesdays 10am—Baby Zoom for those with under 1s

Wednesdays 11:30am—Toddler zoom with story and songs

Text Alex for zoom links 07730 609446

or find us on Facebook:

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Introducing The Ash Ranges Supplement →

By Parishioner Editors Revd Neil Lambert and Alex Sanderson

In unprecedented times we do unusual things! Thank you to everyone who has written in with articles about Ash Ranges. It is striking to see how many of you feel so passionately. In response, we have created the supplement here, to give space to this important issue. While it is not our place to take a political stance, we do encourage everyone to seek truth, stand up for justice, and hold representatives to account.

Messy Church Fun in 2021

By Alex Sanderson

With so much uncertainty we are being very slick and adaptable (otherwise known as making a new plan every time the rules change!) But we do have a plan and we will be putting the mess into Messy Church for you all to enjoy some family friendly church activities in 2021. So what's on the list?

Sunday 24th January: Wedding at Cana 'Messy Church at home' kit. Text us to book a kit for your family and we will deliver to your door or you can collect from us. 07730 609446

13th–21st Feb February: Half Term Lost Sheep Trail Create a sheep for your window and enjoy a sheep spotting walk! (See page 5)

Sunday 21st March: Hope - exploring lent the Messy Church way!

(Covid-secure in church if allowed, kits for home if not) Text Alex to book your place and / or kit: 07730 60446

April : Messy Easter! Format to be confirmed, depending on the rules, keep an eye on Facebook for updates or text us nearer the time on 07730 609446

Find us online:

www.ash-vale.org.uk @StMarysAshVale

www.ashvalechapel.com @AshValeChapel



The Ash Ranges Supplement

- ⇒ **Letter to Jeremy Quin MP By Simon Brown, Trail Action Group**
- ⇒ **Frustration and Injustice By James Morgan-Yates, Save Ash Ranges**
- ⇒ **2021 Glimmers of Hope By Carl Cookson**



An open letter to Jeremy Quinn MP

By Simon Brown, Chair, Trail Action Group

Dear Jeremy,

Before delving into what will be a challenging topic I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your staff a very Happy New Year.

Trail Action Group was set up around 10 years ago with the aim of retaining access to the military training lands for cycling. On talking over the Chairman's role I wanted to build on the previous negotiations with DIO. My goal was to enable and encourage responsible mountain biking on the lands defined by the Aldershot and District Military Lands Byelaws and to correct the anomaly restricting cycling that was added in the 1976 byelaw review.

Over the last few weeks I have realised the matter goes far deeper and the issues we face go beyond recreational enjoyment but start to question how public bodies function, set policy and are accountable which collectively goes to the core of life in a modern and liberal democracy.

It has become apparent that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation South East (DIO SE) are operating against the wider interests of the society they serve, are enacting policy that is not fit for purpose and remains unaccountable for their actions. Neither the checks and balances within the chain of command nor has political intervention offered necessary relief. I write these words not with glee or malice nor lightly, but the current situation is far beyond what the local community should expect as a minimum level of service from a public body. My reasons are outlined below:

Policy

When setting policy, particularly a public facing one, it must be guided by robust evidence. The evidence should be open and available for scrutiny and validation. Existing recreational access policy does not adhere to this path leading to certain groups being marginalised or excluded completely. DIO SE have been pressed repeatedly to produce and provide evidence to support the closure of the Ash Ranges Complex and to also demonstrate why cyclists must be treated as a special case. In both cases no evidence has been provided. Until recently cyclists were told the various wildlife designations (SSSI and SPA status) tied DIOs hands and prevented wider permission. After pointing out cyclists were not singled out as a special case in the laws quoted DIO SE have not repeated this assertion. Other groups – specifically equestrians and The Ramblers – have been given written authority (under the existing byelaws) to enjoy recreation but cyclists are treated to markedly different treatment when compared to other user groups. It is also worth noting other local SSSI and SPA sites do not object to cyclists and

cycling.

The reasons cited for the closure of the Ash Ranges Complex – cost of vandalism and safety – have been rightly questioned by local residents. To date no quantitative or qualitative evidence to support DIO SE assertions has been provided yet the area remains closed. When not in use MOD police patrol the area issuing “Warning Off” notices meaning otherwise law-abiding citizens – people who are very supportive of those who serve and train – are reduced to the status of a common criminal. If policy is not being set by evidence, what is being used to set recreational access policy? The answer I believe is twofold; a risk adverse culture combined with a personal crusade against recreational users and in particular certain groups are singled out for distinctly separate treatment.

Decision Making

To deal with the question of overbearing personal crusade is more straightforward. Without direct evidence the principles of Occam’s Razor guide us; when all other reasonable explanations have been discounted what remains is more rather than less likely correct. I am at a loss to explain or accept why this situation is tolerated but it points to significant failings in the internal operations of DIO; that of effective leadership and an open and just culture that permits lower ranking officials to call into question decisions taken further up the chain. The latter is to be expected if junior grades are subject to annual appraisal and raising difficult questions prejudice the promotional chances. The former is inexcusable.

Risk Paranoia

Risk aversion within DIO SE is prevalent. Everything is seen as potentially dangerous which results in all roads lead to the singular outcome of public liability and litigation. Risk extends beyond the rational nature of military training and goes as far as the surreal with tree roots and holes in the ground as good reason to see the public coming to harm. I feel for any civil servant who sees harm to their career prospects by seeing danger prevalent but this completely overlooks why many use the lands. *The wild open spaces and the (near zero) risks they pose offer an escape and presents challenges civilisation cannot compete with especially during the recent pandemic.* The evidence as gathered in the recent survey conducted by the Byelaws Review team points to a different conclusion. If risk and harm were everything DIO SE describe they would be knee deep in litigation as 59,000 hours of recreation per week could potentially include a large number of twisted ankles (those tree roots) or broken bones (falling down holes). The FOIA requests also reveal no recreational mountain biker has litigated against MOD (the entire UK wide estate - let alone DIO SE) for an accident on the Aldershot Lands. Risk alone is being applied to set policy. Balance of risk respecting the wider societal and community benefits recreational access provides is absent or severely underrepresented.

Communication & Engagement

For such a large estate in regular use by the public the level of DIO SE communication is close to zero. The entrances to the lands have signs intended to instil fear and do nothing to explain the primary purpose of the land and the expected behaviour for recreational users. The local Wildlife Trusts do a more effective job! At another level DIO SE will modify or amend policy and neglect to inform representatives such as TAG with whom they have had detailed discussions. Contrary to the July 2019 agreement between TAG and DIO SE have been stopping cyclists and informing them riding was against the byelaws but permitted on the made-up tracks. The first time TAG heard of this was from a local rider. DIO SE have clearly instructed representatives to act yet neglect to inform anyone else, including the very body representing cyclists. On the basic level mistakes are made. Since the fencing was installed the commitment to keep Long Valley open and available for recreation when not in use is

not being met and the matter has been raised with DIO SE. Their response? To inform that, yes, Long Valley was in use (not according to the evidence on the ground) and that it was booked and busy during Christmas and New Year. No one in DIO SE stopped to question why a unit had booked to train on Christmas Day and no one checked to realise the quoted source for these bookings was *November*. Engaging with DIO SE is equally challenging and they will refer to the Local Access Forums and Parish Councils as exemplar. Neither are effective in holding DIO SE to account and with the exception of a few councillors the benefits of recreational use of the lands are unknown or not understood. Engagement with TAG is strained. I do know DIO SE see me as two-faced but this overlooks two basic principles; measurement is best performed by deeds and action not words, and when the facts change so does my opinion. Some positive engagement has happened in the past and did briefly reappear in 2019 with DIO SE commissioning two reports from TAG. It has subsequently been proven (though FOIA) that one (Ash Ranges Anti Vandal Trail) had been pre-empted by a DIO SE 2015 decision. Neither report delivered as requested by TAG (the second was a trail building proposal) have been formally acknowledged or responded. We are still waiting for a satisfactory explanation as to why it is acceptable to treat volunteers in this manner. Communication from DIO SE can be summarised as weak-to-non-existent and engagement restricted to groups who do not challenge. The issue of Long Valley access remains a case in point – it needed political intervention to compel DIO to engage with TAG, and even then needed more pressure to ensure the lands were available when not in use. To ensure a response is forthcoming, TAG now include local councillors and politicians in all emails to DIO.

Trust

With no independent evidence DIO SE statements are challenged until proven. Every statement issued by DIO SE is now subject to a FOIA request, either directly or with third parties. A rolling list of proven false statements is maintained, and the list runs to 37 items ranging from cost of vandalism (claimed £170k – unproven) via justification for fencing (AAIB cyclists – no corroboration) to reasons for fencing (fly tipping – near zero incidence). Absence of evidence creates a lack of trust. DIO SE are either unaware or do not care. However, for a public body to be in this position should be cause for concern. This is in itself worrying in a democracy that depends on trust to function.

Summary

DIO SE appears to treat the local community – the recreational users of the lands – with contempt. We are seen as nothing but a liability and a problem that needs resentful management whilst the simple principles of Section 2 of the byelaws (casual recreational access when not in use) remains unacknowledged, ignored or actively worked against. But we are more than just families out for a walk, cyclists, equestrians, joggers, dog walkers or mountain bikers. We are citizens and very much part of a large and vibrant community that cares passionately about the open spaces, wildlife and troops who train on the lands. Over the years we have seen a gradual and incremental loss of recreational access with car parks closed, fences erected and barriers placed in the way of historically established routes. At the extreme we are expected to accept 170 years of recreational access denied without good reason. All of these changes are implemented against a backdrop of the government message recommendation for citizens to take responsibility for their health and get active. There is sound evidence that shows a healthy lifestyle leads to reduced visits to GPs and the mental health services. Overall 59,000 hours of recreational access per week brings a massive benefit to NHS services yet this value – until now hidden – is ignored by DIO. Any savings on reported vandalism costs at Ash will be wiped out over time as mental and physical health in the community inevitably declines. There is always a wider cost and society always pays. Policy is set blind and without evidence. Personal crusades set without sound evidence has been allowed to fester even when direct political instruction is given and leads to demonstrable dissent and harm within the local community. The 1997 white paper setting out

what became the FOI law observed "...unnecessary secrecy in government leads to arrogance in governance and defective decision-making". 24 years later the concerns the white paper raised and sought to address persist. Those responsible – DIO SE leadership – should be ashamed of such a position within the local community but they alone cannot carry the full blame. The chain of command remains responsible and I will point out with respect that the buck very much stops at the desk of the politicians – hence why I am writing to you now. We now say “Enough”.

Action Required

For such a long set of issues the resolutions are straightforward:

- Treat DIO SE like any failing hospital or school and apply “Special Measures” until such time
- accountability and trust is restored
- Bypass the chain of command and bring DIO SE into direct and persistent political accountability
- Ensure DIO SE commit to and work with representative user groups willing to challenge
- Reinstate public access at Ash Ranges with immediate and urgent effect
- Issue clear guidance on equitable cycling policy
- Instil an “open and just” culture to permit junior staff to speak without fear or favour
- To reevaluate all evidence and reset risk appraisal based on reality

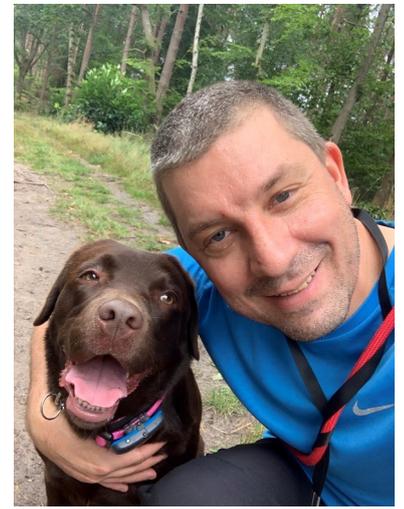
We accept that these will be difficult to implement. DIO SE have long been permitted to exercise power without accountability and there will be push back and objection. However painful, it will be necessary for the avoidance greater conflict and erosion of goodwill towards those who serve. Please rest assured you can rely on TAG for support and assistance. Set against this backdrop we see no reason to think why the forthcoming amended byelaws and consultation will be fit for purpose. DIO SE have pressed ahead with a cycling policy that appears to be closely aligned with a new byelaw provision intended continue unequal access to that of walkers, ramblers and horse riders in advance of the public consultation. For campaigners such as TAG, the evidenced lack of competent approach to policy is frustrating. However, it allows campaigners to exploit the weakness offered by lack of evidence policy. We would rather go up against the unprepared than a department founded on coherent evidenced based policy & effective communication. Persistent bad faith and blunder present ample opportunity for legal challenge and Judicial Review. We will do whatever it takes to maintain casual access whilst remaining willing to work with a reformed DIO committed to “good faith” engagement with the express purpose of achieving joint goals. These goals include ensuring troops using the lands remain undisturbed at all times. Legal challenge would never be preferred but this letter could be “Exhibit A” if and when legal challenge is deemed necessary. All we seek was freedom to responsibly use the lands when not in use – as per Section 2 of the byelaws. This should include mountain biking. The sport is a release, an escape, and a means to elevate and maintain personal fitness away from roads and the urban environment. The lands are a place to leave stress behind and recharge one’s mental and physical resolve to cope with whatever life dishes out. All of this has extreme personal and societal value. Never did we find myself confronting an organisation that was prepared to challenge democratic accountability and ignore political direction to achieve its highly questionable goals. Nor did we expect to encounter persistent bad faith and blunder, as the organisation seems incapable of learning from past errors. The issues DIO SE triggered go far deeper than recreational mountain biking but if it’s necessary to tackle the wider issues for the benefit of the wider recreational community then so be it.

On behalf of TAG, yours sincerely

Simon Brown – Chair, Trail Action Group

Frustration and Injustice

James Morgan-Yates (local resident and founder of AshRanges.com) shares frustration at the situation that local residents find themselves in.



I have lived in Ash Vale, close to the main gate for the ranges for over 7 years. When we moved to the area there were two big attractions that made Ash Vale our choice. Good commuting links (both rail and road) and Ash Ranges as an area for recreation. There were unfortunately many rumours that the ranges were to be closed to the public. However, no public consultations had taken place and before closure this should happen. The Ranges are run by the DIO (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) who are a department within the MoD who look after lands and facilities. You may remember news stories of taxpayers being charged over £50 to change a light bulb in a soldier's home. That was the DIO.

Whilst being funded by the state they lack any kind of oversight or accountability. The issues with the DIO aren't limited to the local residents of Ash and Ash Vale. They have embarked upon a campaign to unlawfully remove public access from military lands throughout the south.

In January 2020, I noticed that the DIO were replacing the main gates to the ranges. To date the gates had been to prevent vehicles entering when the ranges were closed. The new gates were clearly being put in place to prevent access. I asked one of the contractors on the gate what was happening, and he said, "you know they are closing off the ranges, don't you?". I contacted our MP Michael Gove to express my concerns and to discover whether this was true or not. He simply passed my letter on to Jeremy Quin MP (Minister of State for Defence Procurement) who has overall responsibility for the DIO. His response, almost 2 months after my letter to Michael Gove, stated

"I appreciate the strength of feeling amongst the local community on this matter and in response to the ongoing anti-social events at Ash Ranges, the department will be meeting with Ash Parish Council to discuss potential options to address this issue."

His letter was dated 3rd March 2020 yet by the start of lockdown the ranges (the Range Complex as they call it) had already been closed. This is 12% of the total area of the ranges amounting to approx. 330 acres but is the most accessible part of the ranges. If you want to access the open part the nearest unlocked gates are at the end of the road from Ash Vale Station (GU12 5LP) or at the top of hill on the Ash (Eastern) side of the ranges accessed from the woods behind Ash Community Centre. The pathways to these gates are not easily accessible for those with disabilities or the elderly. During the winter months these paths are very muddy and unsafe.

When not in use for military training the ranges were used by a large and varied number of people ranging from the Guides and Scouts, through to Ramblers, Cyclists, Dog Walkers, Horse Riders and even the elderly. None of these activities are easily achievable now. A person with mobility issues isn't able to walk a mile across rough uneven surfaces just to get to an open gate.

When they first closed the complex the DIO had put signs on the gates, which they had locked, stating that the ranges were closed due to COVID-19. I felt I had no option but to fight back at this injustice. On the 8th April my website (www.AshRanges.Com) went live.

Within a week the DIO had reached out and I was invited to attend an online meeting with the DIO and

Ash Parish Council. This was the first contact APC had with the DIO for some time so the DIO had closed off the ranges before speaking with the parish council.

Throughout the rest of the year there were a serious of misinformation and false claims from the DIO including:

- £170k of damage from vandalism which they are unable to give any evidence of
- Using photos of damage from outside of the closed area as proof of vandalism within the complex
- They denied the existence of the COVID signs that were put up at the start of the lockdown. They subsequently admitted that they **had** conveniently used the pandemic as an excuse to close ranges.
- Dog owners not clearing up after their dogs was another reason. Although reports for servicing personnel (who hate the DIO) have stated that this isn't an issue in their experience.
- Members of the public having accidents on the ranges, was another reason yet the evidence provided in response to Freedom of Information requests shows that no accidents happened.

The list goes on and on.

The history of the ranges is relatively simple and the DIO are going beyond their powers to block public access to such an important area for recreation without public consultation, which is against the law. The ranges were first established in 1855. At that time a large part of the ranges was made up of common land. Byelaws were put in place to protect the public's right to use the ranges for recreation when not in use by the military. This allowed for the common land status to be removed so that the military could restrict access during firing. These byelaws still exist today but the DIO have sought to exploit these to go against the spirit with which these were put in place by denying public access to large parts, in this case 330 acres. The byelaws put in place provision for recreational use, when the lands are not being used by the military denoted by red flags and lamps. Within the byelaws there are several prohibited activities such as driving a vehicle. In addition is a clause that prohibits

“enter any part of the Military Lands which is specially enclosed or the entry to which is shown by a notice as being prohibited or restricted.”

This is the clause the DIO are using to justify why the Ash Range Complex is shut to the public, despite having never been closed for the 165 years the ranges have existed up to March 2020. The definition “specially enclosed” is a very interesting one. Clearly this was designed so that the MOD can fence off an area such as a secure building, or an electricity sub-station (for which there are several on the ranges). We were confused by this term and what it meant. A response from a Freedom of Information shows that the MoD has no official definition of what this term means. Yet they are able to use it to define the area that they have closed off?

To be clear that the area closed off (known as the Ash Range complex) is surrounded by fences. To the south and west sides, they use the perimeter fence which navigates around the entire Ash Ranges site, some 11 miles. This is a 5ft high fence, topped with barbed wire with warning signs at regular distances around the perimeter. The north and east sides however utilise a live-stock fence, only 4ft high, with no barbed wire and no warning signs. If you were to cross the fence on the north or east sides you wouldn't know that you were entering on to an enclosed area. I actually raised this point with a MOD Police officer who regularly attends the ranges and his response, “it doesn't matter, you should know they are closed.”.

In my experience over the past year the DIO have two modes of operation. They either operate in

silence hoping no one will notice/challenge or one of arrogance and un-accountability. Any challenge to what they are doing seems to be interpreted as a personal attack on the senior rank and file who are making the decisions. What is clear is that unless we, the local residents, continue to question and hold the DIO to account, they will continue to do what they like. Ministers seem unwilling to get involved so the public are left fighting a secretive organisation, acting against the greater good, funded by their taxes. If we stand by and let this happen, we will permanently lose access to the 330 acres of land already closed off and more worryingly they will be free to execute the next phase of their plans. Perhaps closing of the entire ranges, expansion of the site, selling off for housing? Who knows what this will be but this natural and beautiful resource should be for all to make use of.



The DIO don't care about the tensions they have caused between the military and local residents. Since this area has a rich history of the military and civilians living in harmony, I think their lack of care is a real shame. This in itself should be a wake-up call for politicians to replace the DIO with an organisation that is fit for purpose, offers value to tax payers' money and is able to operate ethically and accountably in today's society.

James

Glimmers of Hope in 2021

By Carl Cookson

2020 will always be remembered as a year of frustration. COVID-19 has had such a dramatic impact on the world and our community. But in the frustration, you see glimmers of hope.

The community, based at St. Marys, has been one of those glimmers. The church has always readily assisted those in need, and it was great to see that we came together to support those who were isolating or needed more support than usual.

My biggest frustration last year was the abrupt closure of Ash Ranges. It came in April, just as we discovered what lock-down meant and had to live with the reality that we would not be able to exercise (as we are encouraged to) in this vast space. For hundreds of years, the whole community had used the now closed area to exercise, socialise, and educate.

Frustration continued when, as a community, we reached out to the MOD and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) (the government organisation responsible for all military estate) and met with silence. No one wanted to talk to us about why.

Finally, in August, reasons started to emerge. In a presentation to the local press and Ash Parish Councillors, three claims were made to support this community space's closure.

Firstly, the cost of repair due to vandalism was high. No supporting documentation backed up this claim. We asked, via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, for the list of the vandalism incidents and what cost is attributed to each. A simple request, you would assume, as the MOD quoted the figure.

Finally, after months of delays and appeals, I received this statement from the MOD in December.

“I have also determined that the costs ... were based on corporate knowledge of such events, and have been advised that there is no recorded information held on how the actual figure was calculated.”

Secondly, the number of training hours lost was high, with no detail given. Another simple request, someone would have had a list to create a figure. After months of delays and challenges, I received this statement from the MOD.

“However, I have been advised that MOD is unable to calculate the training hours lost if a booking was cancelled as a result of vandalism.”

Finally, Health and Safety. In the presentation and an open meeting with Councillors, Michael Gove and Col Cook, the man responsible for the Ranges, the biggest reason for the closure was Health and Safety, protecting the public from the dangers they lived with for hundreds of years. No evidence was given. We requested the report that led to this assertion. No report has been produced. All reports available, point to the fact all risks are mitigated significantly, and no recommendation for closure has been seen.

All three reasons are effectively moot. They do not have any reasoned evidence to back up any of the claims.

Ash Parish Council, in particular, Nigel Manning and Jo Randall, are as frustrated as us. Once presented with evidence, or lack of it, in numerous Zoom calls since September, they became aware that there is no evidence to support closure.

They are frustrated that the MOD states that there were discussions about the closure with Ash PC in August 2018. No one at the council has memory or notes about this discussion. No one at the MOD can produce evidence that this occurred. They are frustrated that H&S has closed Ash Ranges but left Henley Gate and Stoney Castle open, with the same steep drops, shrapnel and other concerns. They are frustrated that the MOD is not communicating with them. Numerous emails and calls have gone unanswered.

But, with all this frustration, there is a glimmer of hope. Our calls with Councillors Nigel and Jo have led to the Ranges being back on the Ash PC meeting schedule on the 11th January 2021.

It was agreed that the council would change stance. Rather than supporting the MOD in their closure, they are requiring the MOD to re-open the ranges when not firing when they have not provided evidence as listed above. This will be initiated with a letter to the MOD. A subsequent letter will be sent to Jeremy Quin regarding the H&S issue and the discrepancies between the risks on Ash Ranges, which are closed, and the ranges at Henley Gate and Stoney Castle that remain open.

Both letters will be written with the support of the Save Ash Ranges group, to ensure we send a strong message that we are not accepting the removal of access and want to discuss the future of Ash Ranges openly to allow continued use by parishioners.

With the support of the council, we are seeing a consistent message being presented to the MOD and hopefully, this political pressure will re-instate the ranges to being somewhere open for all residents, whatever their ability.

Carl Cookson



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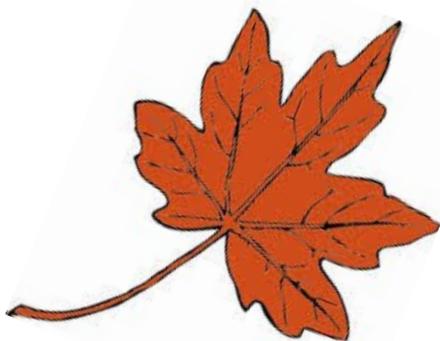
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Bible Study for a New Year : 2 Corinthians 5:15-18

By Helen Lambert

New Year, new you! New Year's resolutions. New "normal". New cases. New vaccine. New variant. New rules. New lockdown. Do you ever wish things would stop being quite so new? 2020 was a whole new experience for everyone – not just in Ash Vale, not just in the UK, but on the whole planet. But what about you? Do you feel renewed? Or just wrung out? The "new" has become "old" and we would all like to move on, but times remain uncertain and precarious.

Let us not be quick to forget what we celebrated at Christmas – in whatever limited way we were able – the coming of the New-born King, the one who himself brought the promise of New Life to all who would accept it. The prophet Isaiah had already told us many years before that God's plan was to do something new: "I am about to do a new thing: now it springs forth..." (Isaiah 43:19); and Jeremiah spoke of a "New Covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31). Jesus spoke of himself as the one who would make this New Covenant possible – the one who would restore our broken relationship with our Creator God and give us a fresh new start.

So, how does this change things for us, as we look ahead to the unknowns of the coming year, and the "knowns" of our old selves that we would so love to see transformed?

Let us turn to the words of the apostle Paul in his second letter to the church in Corinth.

Here we can see that peace with God is a gift (v18) – better than any we might have received at Christmas! What promise are we given in v18? Here we find "newness" that matters, newness that lasts, newness that is life changing! If we choose to follow the Christ whose birth we just celebrated we will see everything from a different, new perspective (v16). We are told that we can become a new person and begin a new life (v18)! The amazing thing about this is that it doesn't depend on our keeping our New Year's resolutions, sticking to our diet or fitness plan, coming out of Lockdown, or even getting the COVID jab. It is a gift that depends only on the unconditional generosity of the Giver, who wants nothing more than for us to be at peace with Him, whatever we are going through!

With this new life, we have a new purpose (v15, 18). We may feel we have lost our sense of purpose as we struggle to adjust to changed

circumstances but, as Paul tells the Corinthian believers, there is meaning outside of ourselves and our immediate situations. Living for Christ means living for others, and peace with God enables us to find peace with others. Too good to be true? If it were all up to us, then perhaps it might be. But the good news is that it is God himself who does the renewing, who changes us from the inside out by his own Spirit. We have a “new commandment” too – to love one another in the same unconditional way that God has loved and accepted us. And we have a new identity, one which isn’t tied to what we do, how good or successful we are, whether we are sick or healthy, what we look like or who our friends are. Our new identity is that we are God’s dearly loved children, who can know his presence and purpose in the worst and the best times.

As Christians we look forward with hope to a time when Christ returns and when there will be no more pain and suffering, no more COVID, no more struggles: “See, I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5), but we don’t need to wait until the end of time to begin to see this at work. The transformation begins with us (v17), but it doesn’t depend on us. God will do it. If we let him, he will make us new from the inside by his Spirit, and as we embark on this new life, we will also see how he transforms the situations we are in and the way we experience them (v16,17).

In the words of the Confession that many say in church every Sunday, we ask God to “grant that we may serve him in newness of life”. Can this be our prayer as we walk forwards through the unknowns of 2021?

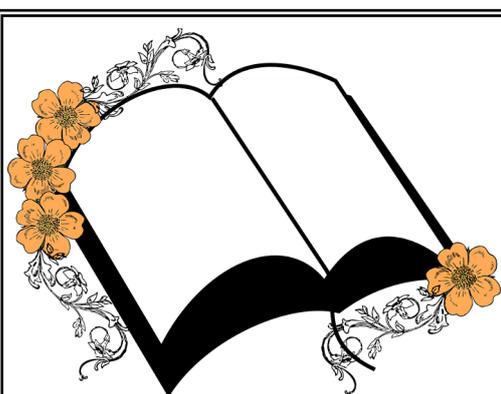
2 Corinthians 5:15-18

¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:^[a] The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

Bible Gateway link is here if you would like to explore the rest of the chapter: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A15-18&version=NIV>



Eco-Church: New things to try in 2021

One of our Eco-Champions, Keri Barber shares some ideas:



Every day, we have the opportunity to either worsen or improve our personal impact on the planet. In 2021 I'm challenging myself to try new things to chip away at my eco-footprint, and tread more lightly on the earth. What will you do for the planet in 2021?

Starting with something simple—Eco cleaning at home:

- **Unsponges** - material one side, repurpose sponge in the middle, hessian or towelling on the other side- sewn together. You can buy these or even make your own!
- **Unkitchen towel** - fabric one side and repurposed towel or flannel on the other- sewn together. Again you can buy these or make your own with recycled material.
- **Home made laundry liquid** - grate a bar of laundry soap then add a box of washing soda crystals and mix.
- **Home made toilet bombs** - 4 parts baking soda, 1 part citric acid, 1tbsp washing up liquid.
- **Wax food wraps** - cotton fabric cut to size then sprinkled with grated bees' or soya wax and heated in the oven.
- **Grow your own luffas** then dry, strip off outer skin and use for cleaning.
- **Home made dishwasher powder** - 4 parts washing soda to 1 part citric acid and 1 part salt. White vinegar is a perfect rinse aid substitute.
- **Home made cleaner**- equal parts white vinegar & water with a few drops of essential oil

The big ger picture—tackling your Environmental footprint:

How big is your Environmental footprint? Remember you can work this out using online tools such as for example the free WWF tool here: <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

Plant some trees: If you can plant some at home or in the UK that's great, if not, how about sponsoring the tree nurseries in Uganda that William & team have set up in the South Rwenzori Diocese? The Amaha We Uganda (Hope for Uganda) link is here: <https://www.amahaweuganda.org/> (Other charities available, this is the one St Mary's supports)

Look at new ways to live gently on the earth, for example Green Christian has this leaflet: <https://www.greenchristian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/leaflet/nine-ways.pdf>

Go big or go home: Looking for something more ambitious to get excited about? Have a read about this football club who have gone vegan and seen some wonderful benefits. <https://www.fgr.co.uk/our-ethos/100-vegan> Will you make changes to your diet for 2021?



A sign that it worked

By Mike Jacobs

Over eighty years ago I was marked with a sign that said I was safe. In 1940, I and many, many other children were vaccinated at the clinic in Stoke Road, Guildford. This left a scar high up on my left arm that was affectionately known by everyone as a 'Dickie Bird'. The vaccination was to protect me against smallpox (variola), a disease that had decimated Europe throughout the middle ages. This process was followed a few weeks later by injections against Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. Since discovery of the process of vaccination, smallpox has been eliminated and is now considered exterminated.

Last week my memories of those days were reawakened when I went to the Princes Hall to be vaccinated against Covid 19.

It all started with a telephone call from my Doctor's surgery asking if I could attend the following morning at 9.00 o'clock. I was surprised at the haste but agreed to go along. So at the appointed time I presented myself at the car park at the Princes Hall, clearly labelled for anyone expecting to receive an injection. I was met by the attendant completely attired, as all car park attendants, but with an added facemask. This gentleman showed amazing consideration and could not have been more helpful. He directed me to the hall where an amazing set-up had been laid out with the best interest of patients to the fore.

On entering the room, I was met by a fully masked young lady who disinfected my hands and conducted me to a chair set two meters from all the other chairs. Along the rear of the hall were five vaccination stations isolated from one another. Patients were directed to the injection stations in strict order of arrival and after answering a brief verbal questioning the needle was inserted in my arm. I think they used my Dickie Bird as an unconscious target. I was then handed a leaflet and a registration card and asked to sit in the next room for 15 minutes. My departure time was clearly written on the card as 9.16. am.

Arriving at the departure lounge I was again conducted to a well spaced out chair and the time, displayed on a large screen, pointed out to me. When the time showed 9.16 I left the building and picked up my car. As my appointment started at 9 o'clock and my departure was set at sixteen minutes past nine, minus the post treatment wait means the injection and everything associated with it, took one minute. At every stage of my progress the friendliness of all the people involved was so very tangible. They were all very professional and I noticed they wiped down chairs as soon as they were vacated. I was very impressed at the helpful, friendly and yet professional way everything was done. My one regret is that they were all gowned up and wearing face masks so I was unable to recognise anyone and, when we meet in the future, I will not know them.

THANK YOU NHS, you surpassed all my expectations.



Seasonal Recipe –Wild Garlic Pesto

By Vicki Fox

The perfect seasonal recipe, and you can even forage for the ingredients!

You will need:

300g wild garlic leaves (as fresh as possible)

100g hard cheese (a nice English cheddar to keep it local, or some Parmesan), finely grated

One lemon , zested and juiced

80g English Hazelnuts (or pine nuts)

300ml cold pressed rapeseed oil

Method:

Dry fry the hazelnuts (or pine nuts) to remove the skins.

Once the nuts are toasted, add all the ingredients to a blender and blitz to a paste, adding more rapeseed oil if required until you have a thick but smooth consistency.

If you are a garlic fanatic, feel free to add a couple of cloves to boost the garlic flavour. Gorgeous drizzled over crusty bread; with some new potatoes or tossed with some hot pasta.

You can follow Vicki on Instagram at [@TheEccentric Farmer](https://www.instagram.com/TheEccentricFarmer)



Happy news from Uganda

By Judith Vella & Alex Sanderson (2 of the Amaha We Uganda Trustees)



A Bountiful Harvest: Part of Amaha We Uganda's 'No Money No Food' campaign involved providing seed for planting in August, thus providing crops of beans for food in the next season. Without this help, families were facing a crisis, because during the early Covid lockdown all they had to eat was their seed grain, they had nothing left to plant. We are delighted to report that the harvest was

blessed, providing an enormous crop in November. All the women's groups who had received seed for planting have given some seed back after harvesting. This seed will be redistributed to more groups in March 2021 for the next season's planting. In this way we hope they can make this a sustainable means of growing food. In total 977kg of beans were paid forward for replanting. An amazing feat.

Tree nursery number 3! It is not only the beans which have done well. The third tree nursery, in the mountain region of Kiraro, near Bwera, is also doing brilliantly. And more good news is that tree saplings from Kajwenge have already been taken up to the mountains of Kabatunda for planting. Below is a photo of the women being trained in the vital importance of these trees and how to take care of them.



Feeling inspired? You can support the work of Amaha We Uganda here:
<https://www.amahaweuganda.org/fundraising> Thank you for your support



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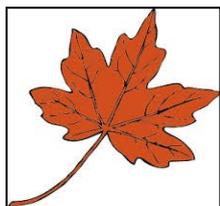
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Thursday morning

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Micki 07799 323436

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Post 2020

Well, the light is on at the end of the tunnel.

We are through the Solstice, the daylight hours are increasing, we have survived Christmas, we have survived Brexit, we have survived Hogmanay and there is seemingly even a Covid19 vaccination that gives protection (starting a couple of weeks after the inoculation) enabling us to survive exposure to Covid19 unscathed.

During the lockdown I have been restricted to house and garden with the occasional discussion with neighbours “over the garden fence”. It’s been a strange time and I’ve had to adopt survival techniques that I thought were only for television reality shows. (It’s amazing how many meals and part meals one can get from a chicken quarter and its bones.) Supermarket delivery and click & collect services have become essential lifelines. And with only myself for company I’ve learnt again to read books (delivered by a well-known delivery service) and played solitaire (courtesy of Google & Microsoft) more times than I thought possible, all to keep the old little grey cells working. I have read Google avidly and now know a more about Australian and American politics than I did or ever wanted to before. To prevent weight gain I have avoided comfort foods as much as possible and I have yet to open a large Christmas present tin of shortbread biscuits. I have succumbed to the occasional tit bit from the Quality Street container (that’s a lot easier to do than when having the sweets in an open dish). I have exercised up and down the garden many times, and sawn and chopped logs to keep my muscle tone up to scratch and to keep my weight under control. But I shudder to think what the gas bill for the heating will be this time round through being at home for most of the day.

Despite all this I believe that things are on the up. In the garden primroses have been cheering me up since before Christmas (I know that they shouldn’t be in flower but they are), their bright yellow faces are a real tonic and now walking down the garden and into the “orchard” I can spot the signs that things are stirring. The snowdrops are almost in flower, the daffodils/narcissus are 6” (15cm) high and the rosettes of the cowslips are getting ready to push upwards, The buds on the fruit trees are swelling indicating that blossom time is not that far away and the birds are definitely getting ready to mate and to build nests. New life is coming.

So nuts to Nostradamus and his dire predictions: let’s hope that the vaccines prove suitable for all variations of Covid19 and that although 2021 will be the shortest recorded sidereal year in 50yrs (the earth is spinning at its fastest rate in 50yrs), let’s just keep smiling and whistling under all difficulties and things will be back to “normal” by Christmas. Yes 2021 is ours for the taking, enjoy.



Scrivener

What's on in Ash Vale? Feb/March



Weekly Events:

Sundays 10am –Join St Mary's for our **weekly Church Service**. All are welcome. During lockdown we will be on Zoom only, and once the doors open again we will be both in zoom and in person. Contact us to go on the weekly email list for links and news. Parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk
Wednesday night Evensong is back too, contact the office for the latest timings.

Mondays 11am: Coffee Chat Zoom for parents and carers of little ones. This is hosted by Chapelkids and LittleLambsLibrary toddler groups, free to join, all welcome. Contact Alex on 07730609446

Tuesdays 10am: Babies @StMarys Support Group coffee zoom. We are starting this new Support Group on zoom while covid numbers are so high locally but will open our doors and allow socially distanced meetings once things improve. Text us on 07730609446 for details.

(Booking will be essential once we are back in church, to ensure we are within legal limits on number)

Wednesdays 11:30am: Toddler Zoom with Chapel Kids and Little Lambs Library. We are zooming every week with chat, games, show and tell, story and songs until we are allowed to open the toddler groups again. Contact: 07730609446

All events are subject to change due to Covid-19 safety rules. Please keep in touch via our mailing list for weekly notices by email parishoffice@ash-vale.org.uk or keep an eye on Facebook @StMarysAshVale

Monthly Makes at The Chapel

Artists in Residence Debi & Jono Retallick host a 'monthly make' fundraising event for The Chapel, Ash Vale. Please see www.ashvalechapel.com To book your place & receive zoom details debiretallick@googlemail.com

1st Feb 4pm: 3D Felt Hearts Workshop

This monthly make will be a 40 minute session creating some 3D felt hearts for someone you love whilst learning the art of needle felting. Debi will take you through the process step by step via the zoom platform. A needle felting kit will need to be sent out to you beforehand so please ensure you **book asap** to allow time for this. The cost of the kit will be £10 for wool, tools and postage. There is no set charge for the workshop itself, but please make a donation to the Chapel Project to support the ongoing community projects. The session is suitable for people 10 yrs and above.

Tues 9th Feb 4pm Wire & paper birds

The March monthly make will be a 60 minute session where Debi will take you through the process of creating a wire armature and hand building with paper to create a Bird form. Suitable for 11rs+ Kit £6 & please make a donation to The Chapel. We look forward to seeing you.

Lost Sheep Trail for Half Term

Make a sheep or two for your window or front garden, and display them during Feb half term 13th-21st Feb and then **Enjoy a sheep hunting walk** or two in Half Term. **See page 5!**

Useful Numbers – Help is at hand!

Here are some of the useful numbers you may need if you need support in Ash Vale. If you think we are missing a number please let us know.

Local Churches:

St Mary's, Ash Vale – 07863 311165 (Parish Administrator's Mobile)

The Chapel, Ash Vale – 07730 609446 (Project Manager's Mobile)

St Peter's, Ash – 01252 331161

Holy Angels, Ash – 01252 321422

St Paul's, Tongham – 01252 782790

Local help and support during the Covid-19 crisis:

Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support group (volunteers doing shopping & prescription runs & emergency food parcels) – 07843 489796

Ash Parish Council – 01252 328 287

Ash Citizens Advice – 01252 315569 or 01252 314711

Ash Vale Health Centre – 01252 317551 (Out of hours phone 111, in an emergency dial 999)

Guildford Borough Council Covid-19 Community Helpline – 01483 444400

Community Wellbeing Team - 07769 642053 / 07901 513652

Safe & Settled Team - 01483 444476 for those needing help at home on arriving back from hospital or needing some help to manage at home.

If you need to talk to someone : national helplines

Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123 or text SHOUT 85258

National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ (run by Refuge)

The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327

The Mix, free information/support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

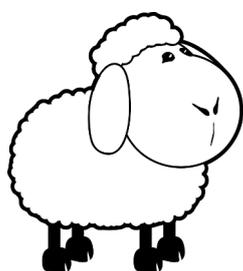
PAPYRUS—Young suicide prevention society, 0800 068 4141

Childline for children 0800 1111

Alcoholics Anonymous—0800 917 7650 (24/7)

Narcotics Anonymous—0300 999 1212

Cruse Bereavement Care— 0808 808 1677



Contacting The Parishioner:

Call Alex (Ed) 07730 609446 in the first instance and she will put you in touch with the right volunteer.



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What's inside?

Letter from the Vicarage – (p3&4) By Revd Neil Lambert

Get Ready! **Lost Sheep Trail** – (p5) Something fun for Half Term 13th-21st Feb

Food Parcels Team Update – (p8 & 9) By Carla Morson, Ash, Ash Vale & Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group

Meet the Local – (p10&11) The Parishioner interviews John Tonks

Messy Church 2021 – (p14) Mark your diaries for some family friendly fun!

The Ash Ranges Supplement (p14-22)

- ⇒ Open letter to Jeremy Quinn MP—By Simon Brown, Chair, Trail Action Group
- ⇒ Frustration & Injustice – James Morgan-Yates (of AshRanges.com) shares the frustration that local residents find themselves in.
- ⇒ Glimmers of Hope in 2021 – By Carl Cookson

Bible Study for a New Year—(p24&25) By Helen Lambert

Eco-Church: New things to try in 2021 – (p26) by Keri Barber

A sign that it worked— (p27) By Mike Jacobs

Seasonal Recipe —Wild Garlic Pesto - (p28) By Vicki Fox

Happy news from Uganda - (p29) BY Judith & Alex

Post 2020 – (p32) By Scrivener

What's on in Ash Vale? - (p33)

Help is at Hand! - (p34) Useful numbers



Don't miss the Uganda Quiz!

Friday 5th Feb on Zoom (Full details on the back inside cover)

We welcome fun, informative and local interest items!

The copy deadline for the April/May 2021 issue is 7th March 2021

Emails please to: parishioner@ash-vale.org.uk

In these unusual times we are minimising the risk to our readers and volunteers by printing only on request, and by sharing *The Parishioner* far and wide via email, website and social media instead. Please remember to like & share online! If you or someone you know would like a paper copy please pick one up at St Mary's or The Chapel, or call / text 07730 609446 to request one. ***Best wishes & stay safe!***

The Parishioner seeks to explore and reflect upon a wide variety of local issues whilst recognising that not everyone will agree with the views expressed. These do not necessarily reflect the views of all the members of St Mary's Church nor those of its Parochial Church Council.