



First school's "Imaginarium"

Parent power has meant a fantastic new outdoor learning space for village children

PARENT power has meant that our First-School's new £13,000 outdoor learning space has cost only half what it would have without help.

Six months of planning, fund-raising, painting and building has seen the completion of an "Imaginarium" at Ashton-under-Hill First School.

The project received a major boost from a Big Lottery Grant of £10,000 but as parent Claire Kirke said: "My best guess is that it would have cost us twice as much without the parents volunteering their time and materials."

The "Imaginarium" is the brainchild of parent Cheryl Firkins, a landscape architect, who said: "The school had a vision to create a multi-nature area based around an outdoor classroom and

Picture by Lucy Taylor



invited parents to a brainstorming session.

"A plan was drawn up featuring new spaces inspired by mini beasts, plants and the natural environment all set along a discovery trail leading from the school buildings into the quiet garden and out onto the playing field, ending at the outdoor classroom."



The Imaginarium also includes a 'beach area', a fort, discovery zones, and a bug hotel which has been created by the children and many insects have already taken up residence.

Mrs Kirke added: "The Imaginarium will continue to evolve. We have ordered outdoor musical instruments and are eagerly awaiting their arrival."

Head teacher Bryony Baynes said: "The Imaginarium has opened up many new opportunities by providing a stimulating and exciting environment for the children to enjoy the great outdoors."

"At the school we encourage the enjoyment of nature through frequent visits to Forest School. Now they can continue that learning in the playground."

The children have recently raised £1,300 through a sponsored walk. This money will be used to create fantastical creatures for the Imaginarium.



**Goodbye Colin Davison - See P2
for tribute to all his hard work !!**



Thanks for your support

AFTER the coffee morning held in Ashton Village Hall on August 25th in aid of the Midlands Air Ambulance, we were able to send a cheque for £761 to the charity. As a result of further donations and the sale of the village photograph we have been able to forward a further cheque for £216, making £977 in total. A very big THANK YOU to everyone who has helped to achieve this amazing result.

Angela Fletcher

Litter-Pick

Keep our village clean

A LITTER –pick is being organised by Ashton Parish Council on **Saturday, February 2nd**, meeting at the playing fields at 10.am.

At the November parish meeting the problem of dog mess was again highlighted and dog owners are urged to clean up after their pets.



Goodbye...and hello!

A big THANK YOU to Colin Davison as we say goodbye for all his hard work producing the *Ashton News* for the past few years!

Colin has done a wonderful job over the past three years. During that time the newsletter revealed Ashton’s links with Hollywood and Antarctica, its M16 secret agent and the strange story of the day it rained frogs, as well as extending coverage of village planning issues.

“So much happens in Ashton, from sport to great Shindig events, and it is thanks to the many contributors and distributors that *Ashton News* can tell everyone about it,” said Colin.

We wish Colin and his wife Maggie all the best as they settle in their new home and we hope we shall see them again in Ashton from time to time.

Colin hands the reins over to Brian Stephens, David Wood and Rosemary Halliday who welcome you all to this, their first attempt to follow in his footsteps. Colin is a hard act to follow but with David on board who has some experience in writing news reports, we’re hoping we can produce something passable as a newsletter! We very much need your help and hope you will not be shy in coming forward with articles to make the *Ashton News* a vibrant and informative read. **THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER!!**

Any comments and particularly any articles of interest please contact Brian Stephens on 01386 881467 e-mail: stephens@briananddianne.plus.com

SNOW LINE

Any residents who get caught out this winter by bad



weather can take advantage of Ashton’s **Emergency Village Snow Line**.

If anyone gets stuck in the village and needs to get out for a hospital, doctor or other urgent appointment - or is running short of food or medication - we have a village **HELP LINE** with a list of people with four-wheel drive cars willing to come to your aid. Please let your friends and neighbours know about the scheme.

Contact:

Nadine Simpkin: 01386 881162 or
Sarah Lane: 01386 881540

For more general transport needs, Evesham Community Transport Scheme offers transport to people who have no other means of getting out and about. The scheme can help with visits to doctors, hospitals, dentist, hairdressers shopping and social visits.

Contact: **01386 45035**

weekdays 9.30am-1pm or
e-mail:

transporteveshamvolunteers.org.uk

Success for Ashton Under Hill WI

AT the recent Worcestershire Federation of WI's Annual Council Meeting, Ashton under Hill WI entered the 'Best of British' Craft & Cookery Competition and walked away with two trophies. **Judith Hunter** came 1st with her floral art and design arrangement. In the cookery class **Alex Dodge** won 1st place for her plum jam. Together with a bakewell tart baked by **Pauline O'Hagan** and a tea bread by **Alex Dodge**, both of which scored highly, Ashton won the cookery shield for the second time in three years.

In the co-operative entry they also did well, scoring 86.5 out of a possible 100, coming fourth overall.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

After official business was dealt with members listened to **Adam Henson** (TV's *Countryfile*) who gave a very enthusiastic talk about his life on the farm and becoming a TV personality.

If you would like to find out more about the WI please give **Marjory Facer (882171)** or **Dianne Stephens (881467)** a call. They meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm at Ashton Village Hall. Their next meeting is 8th January. Apart from monthly meetings there's also monthly local walks and lots of fabulous outings!



Farm Life Charles Archer

What an unusual year! WE started with drought with the difficulties it brought and then rain, rain and still more rain. No one can remember a year with such consistently unsettled weather. It is unprecedented in living memory. Harvest was difficult or impossible with some

crops left in the ground and little signs of a window of opportunity to gather them in. The quality of the cereal crops harvested was poor and the yields were low, resulting in very little quality grain available for seed sowing. There are many thousands of acres in our local area that have not been sown this autumn due to wet and waterlogged fields. Those fields that have been planted have bare patches due to standing water and slugs happily munching on any germinating shoots.

Decisions will be made for future sowings as and when conditions allow. Hundreds of acres of potatoes have been lost due to the crop just rotting in the ground. Livestock producers have an abundance of grass and some reasonable hay and silage in store to feed their animals throughout the coming winter. However, straw for bedding is in short supply. All this adds up to increased prices for both the producer and consumer alike.

Cut your Fuel Costs!!



VILLAGERS in Ashton are being encouraged to participate in an energy-switching scheme which could help them make "substantial" savings. Councillor **Frank Moore** reported at the recent parish council meeting that Wychavon's chosen partner for energy-switching scheme was "Ichoosr", a Dutch company which, with the support of Wychavon, will pamphlet the region for subscribers. Then, on the basis of anticipated numbers, the company will negotiate with major gas and electricity suppliers. The savings are said to be substantial and **Frank** recommended that the whole village be encouraged to participate when the pamphlet arrives, particularly as it will be organised and supported by Wychavon.

Plant Centre set to grow with new farm shop and tea room

ASHTON Garden Plant Centre has been granted planning permission for a new shop at the nursery on the Cheltenham Road.

The shop will be located near to the entrance to the site and will incorporate a tea room and farm shop.

The owners, Richard and Christine Shaw together with their youngest son Matthew, have already started to design the interior and to look for local suppliers of quality produce for them to sell. The small refreshment area will provide drinks and snacks to customers with views across to Bredon Hill.



Richard said: "We are all very excited about receiving the planning permission as it enables us to expand our offering and provide a high-quality facility that we believe, from talking to our customers, is needed. Hopefully it will create employment for local residents too. We anticipate construction will start early in the New Year." Christine added: "If anyone wants to see the plans, please just pop into the shop and we'll show them to you."



Ashton News 4:

RAINBOWS

Look, learn, laugh, love



RAINBOWS, the youngest section in Girlguiding UK, are celebrating their 25th birthday this year.

Girls aged five to seven have lots of fun at their meetings, trying out new skills, playing games, making new friends and gaining confidence.

In January there are a few vacancies for girls to join the pack in Ashton under Hill.

They meet from 4.30pm-5.30pm on Wednesday afternoons at the Village Hall.

For more information, contact:

Nicola Joscelyne
01386 424630

Christmas bin collections and Christmas tree recycling

CHANGES to bin collection dates over the festive period will affect Ashton residents for three weeks after Christmas.



Bins normally collected on:

- *Thursday December 27th will be collected on Saturday 29th.
- *Friday December 28th collections will move to Monday December 31st.
- *Thursday January 3rd to Saturday January 5th.
- *Friday January 4th to Monday January 7th.
- *Thursday January 10th to Friday January 11th.
- *Friday January 11th to Saturday January 12th.

Christmas trees can be recycled between **January 3rd and January 17th** at local sites including Evesham Country Park at Twyford, The Plant Centre at Knowle Hill and Three Springs Garden Centre at Pershore.

Parish Council Grants

The Parish Council agreed recently to award £1,326 to St Barbara's Church to meet half the annual cost of grass and hedge cutting. They also voted to increase the annual donation to Ashton Recreation Centre to £2,500 as from 2013/2014 to help with the escalating costs of maintaining facilities at the Playing Fields.

BUSYFINGERS Mums & Toddlers
every Thurs 10am
Ashton Free Church Hall
come and join us for coffee and chat



A Christmas Evening

Come and enjoy an evening of song, laughter and recitals
with carols, hot supper, mince pies and mulled wine

Ashton Village Hall

Friday December 14th at 7.30pm



Contact:

David & Helena 881402

wood.david83@gmail.com or

Neil Thomson 881250

jamesneil.thomson@talktalk.net

The Summer when rain stopped
play again...and again...and again

DESPITE the wettest summer in living
memory, Ashton-under-Hill Cricket
Club is still in pretty good shape,
members heard at the AGM on
Tuesday, November 24th.

The bad weather hugely disrupted
this summer's fixture list and had a
consequent effect on revenue,
particularly bar takings.

Chairman Guy Garland said: "It was dire
season. In more than 30 years playing cricket
I haven't seen a summer like it. But the few
social functions we managed to run stood us
in good stead."

On the playing side, the 1st XI managed to
stay in Division One of the Cotswold Hills
League after a difficult season, while the



Seconds promised much but failed to
gain promotion. However, they will
play in Division Six next year.

One of the highlights of Ashton's
season was the Under-16 team
winning their league after an
unbeaten summer, while the
Under-12s won half their games. The
Under-14s failed to win a game but
ran the opposition close on more
than one occasion, said junior coach

Dave Whitehouse. Another high point was
when the club welcomed a new president,
Bill Shirra, who has already had a positive
impact and become heavily involved in the
life of the club.

The club always welcomes new players and
they are invited to turn up to **pre-season
nets** at Prince Henry's High School cricket
centre in Evesham, starting on **Tuesday,
March 12th, from 7pm-8pm.**

Christmas Services in Ashton under Hill

"For unto us a child is born unto us a Son is given"

You are warmly invited to Follow the Journey to
Bethlehem this Christmas at



St Barbara's Church

Wednesday 12th December at 6.30pm: Ashton Celebration of Christmas followed by mulled wine and mince pies (collection for a charity to be announced).

Sunday 16th December at 11am: Family Service with a Nativity Theme. Young readers and musicians wanted to take part! Please contact Alex 881487 or Malcolm 881778.

Monday 24th December at 3.30pm: Christmas Eve Crib Service. The Posada travelling Nativity returns to St Barbara's.

at 10pm: Midnight Holy Communion.

Tuesday 25th December at 10am: Christmas Day Family Service of Praise.

Sunday 6th January at 11am: Twelfth Night Songs of Praise with hymns and readings for the season, followed by refreshments. We would like to hear your choice of hymns, carols and readings, so please contact Alex on 881487 or Malcolm 881778.

Ashton Free Church

Sunday 23rd December at 10.45am and 6pm: Celebration of Christmas. Coffee and mince pies will be served after both meetings.

CHRISTMAS DAY at 9.30am: Short Service to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

