



# PARISH NEWS

covering

**SHILLINGTON, PEGSDON & HIGHAM GOBION**

A festive poster for a Christmas Fair. The background is black with white snowflakes and stars. It features various Christmas-themed illustrations: holly leaves, a red and white striped Christmas ball, green pine branches, red and green snowflakes, a red and white striped candy cane, a red gift box with a green ribbon, a brown bear wearing a Santa hat, and a cartoon Santa Claus. The text is centered and reads: "SHILLINGTON LOWER SCHOOL", "Christmas" in a large white cursive font, "FAIR", "FRIDAY", "13TH DECEMBER", "3:45PM - 5:30PM", ".GAMES-FOOD-CRAFTS-STALLS", "PLUS SPECIAL GUEST", and "Father Christmas" in a white cursive font.

SHILLINGTON LOWER SCHOOL

*Christmas*

FAIR

FRIDAY  
13TH DECEMBER  
3:45PM - 5:30PM

.GAMES-FOOD-CRAFTS-STALLS

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST  
*Father Christmas*

**Issue 175 – DECEMBER 2024**

*Deadline for February edition – Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025*

## PARISH COUNCIL

The October meeting took place a few days after exceptionally heavy rain had overwhelmed drains and flooded roads and some properties in the village. The ward councillor had requested that those affected report details to Central Bedfordshire Council as this will help inform whether anything can be done to reduce the risk of it happening again. The Parish Council decided to contact Anglian Water who are responsible for sewers to check that they are functioning correctly and CBC as there were reports that many road drains were blocked.

Road safety at the High Road and Upton End Road junction has long been a concern and the October meeting heard that Central Bedfordshire Council were considering introducing a scheme that would prevent parking close to the junction. Parish Councillors felt that the length of road involved was inadequate and that restrictions should extend further away from the junction.

In November, the Parish Council selected a new councillor following the vacancy created when Blake Stevenson stood down after becoming MP for this area. In November, the meeting heard presentations by two village residents who both made a strong case for serving on the Council. Councillors voted to co-opt Joseph Olding from Hanscombe End Road. After signing the relevant forms, Joseph joined the existing councillors for the remainder of the meeting.

Regarding traffic speed, we await further news from Central Bedfordshire Council about information they gathered in Shillington during November and from the police who were monitoring the 40mph zone in Pegsdon.

Thanks very much to everyone who has offered to join the Community Emergency Response Team for Shillington. More people are needed, so please get in touch with the clerk if you would like to help. We are also looking for hubs where equipment could be stored and where anyone affected by an emergency could go for support.

To monitor the Council's finances, the clerk provided a half-yearly statement showing expenditure to the end of September compared with the budget compiled last December. It was noted that far more than expected had been spent on street lighting as many of the older street lights had failed and been replaced with new and more efficient LEDs.

The Parish Council administers a grant scheme for local organisations to assist with one-off projects that benefits local residents. Councillors discussed a request for a grant towards installing a christmas tree in the grounds of the war memorial. In recent years personal donations have paid for it but the cost increased this year and there was a shortfall. The council agreed to award £100 so that the tree could appear this year and advised the applicants to seek donations or other funding in good time in future.

Central Bedfordshire Council had informed us of the following planned road closures:

- **Meppershall Road.** *New ducting installations works. From Upton End Road junction for approx. 93m. The closure will be in place from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> December from 0930-1530hrs.*
- **Apsley End Road.** *Access for Engineers to work in overhead structure to repair cables customer without service. The closure will be in place 7<sup>th</sup> January from 0930-1530hrs.*

The Parish Council will be meeting twice in December for the monthly meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and the finance meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>. Both will begin at 7.45pm at the Congregational Church. All meetings are open for parishioners to attend.

*For all Parish Council issues please contact:*

**Miss Lauren Darnell, Clerk to the Parish Council**

45 Tiger Moth Way, Lower Stondon, Hitchin, Herts. SG16 6GN. ☎ 01462-713224

email: [clerk@shillington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@shillington-pc.gov.uk) <https://shillington-pc.gov.uk>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / ITEMS / NEWS IN BRIEF



A huge **THANK YOU** to regular contributors, advertisers, sponsors and distributors of this magazine.

Your kind support ensures the continuity of the Parish News.  
Best wishes to all readers and their families for a healthy, happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. **Sally S.**

**DATE FOR YOUR 2025 DIARY**

**SHILLINGFEST 25**

**SATURDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**at THE MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELDS**



*Stalls and sideshows from village organisations, charities and businesses; live music afternoon and evening; food stalls and BBQ; inside and outside bars; more activities to be confirmed as plans develop.*

*Next planning meeting - Social Club - Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. If you would like to be involved please come along, or contact Sally (07711-504489) to book your stall.*



## WREST PARK VOLUNTEER OPEN DAYS

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 11-1 pm**

**Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1-3 pm**

**Wrest Park Mansion - Drawing Room.**

- *Would you like to be a part of a great team?*
- *Would you like to spend time in one of England's most prestigious and fascinating Gardens?*
  - *Would you like to share your enthusiasm and love of history?*
  - *Then come and volunteer for English Heritage at Wrest Park.*

*Whether it's welcoming and chatting to visitors as a Meet & Greeter, telling the stories of our unique house and garden as a Room Guide or driving the buggy around our beautiful grounds, there are plenty of ways to get involved here at Wrest Park, so come along to one of our open days and find out more about what's involved and how you can help our visitors.*

## SHILLINGTON CARE

Do you need help with transport from Shillington?

We can get you to the surgery, hospital and collect your prescriptions. **Shillington Care** is an informal group of people able to give help. Give us a call and we will arrange for someone to pick you up and bring you back.

Initially, speak to **Liz** on **01462-711594** or leave a message.

If there is a delay on this number then call **07930-812940**





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# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH SHILLINGTON & GRAVENHURST

[www.allsaintsshillington.org.uk](http://www.allsaintsshillington.org.uk)

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Hello from All Saints Church!

During December, the church celebrates the season of Advent, as we wait in anticipation and hope for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. In amongst all the busyness and preparation that December may bring, Advent offers us all an opportunity to pause and reflect on our lives and the hopes we may have.

And when Christmas comes, it is a time of great joy as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Yet, for many, Christmas can be a difficult time, maybe due to difficult memories, our current circumstances, or what we see happening in the world around us.

Every Christmas though, as we focus upon Jesus in the crib, we are encouraged to remember that this child, was God coming to earth. God coming to share in our humanity. Jesus was born into the mess of a stable to a young mother who didn't know how the story would unfold. Jesus came to share in our vulnerability and the mess that our lives can sometimes be. Jesus comes in all of that, to love us and give us hope.

This is the hope of Christmas; Jesus born on earth, loving you each and every day.

All Saints' Church is open every day and everyone is welcome to come into the church to enjoy the space, a place of peace and prayer or join in any of the Christmas and Sunday services. We look forward to seeing you.

Have a very blessed and hope filled Christmas!

*Revd Jenna Dearden*

**Email: [revjennadearden@gmail.com](mailto:revjennadearden@gmail.com)**

**Mobile: 07708 666612**





All are welcome to our Christmas and Sunday services. We look forward to seeing you there!

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Wednesday 18 December 7.30 pm Carol Service  
 Wednesday 25 December 9.30 am Christmas Holy Communion  
 Sunday 5 January 2025 4.00 pm Christingle



**SUNDAY SERVICES IN DECEMBER**

1 December 9.30 am Holy Communion for Advent  
 5.00 pm Evensong for Advent Sunday  
 8 December 9.30 am Holy Communion  
 15 December 9.30 am Morning Prayer  
 22 December 9.30 am Holy Communion  
 29 December 10.30 am Joint service at the Congregational Church in Shillington

**SUNDAY SERVICES IN JANUARY**

5 January 9.30 am Holy Communion  
**4.00 pm Christingle Service**  
 12 January 9.30 am Holy Communion  
 19 January 9.30 am Morning Prayer  
 26 January 9.30 am Holy Communion

**IMPORTANT CHURCHYARD NOTICE**

*On 23 October 2024, as part of the maintenance of the churchyard 'topple testing' was carried out and a number of memorials were laid down.*

*Where possible, when visiting family memorials please do check the stability of your memorial and let us know about any instability. We can then advise you about possible next steps. If you have any questions about this or are aware of any unstable headstones in the churchyard, please do get in touch.*

**200 CLUB - LUCKY WINNERS!**

**October**

1<sup>st</sup> no.20 - Hannah Bishop 2<sup>nd</sup> no. 3 - Victoria Howarth 3<sup>rd</sup> no. 87 Tabitha Gurr

**November**

1<sup>st</sup> no. 155 - Harrison Ashwell 2<sup>nd</sup> no. 44 - Margaret Barnard 3<sup>rd</sup> no. 179 - Natalie Lockey.

**WINTER AND CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING EVENTS**

<p><b>Christmas Fayre</b>  <b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December,</b>      in church, from 12 noon      until 3.30pm.</p>	<p><b>Santa's Float - Santa will be coming around the village!</b>  <b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December,</b>      early evening</p>	<p><b>Quiz Night</b>  <b>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 from 7.30 pm</b> at the Village Hall, including light refreshments. Bring your own drink and glasses</p>
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The **Bingo Evening** is postponed until Spring 2025.

For more information please contact; **Liz Brewer** on **07930-812940** or [lizbrewer313@gmail.com](mailto:lizbrewer313@gmail.com). Please see Friends Page for their coming events.

# SHILLINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2024



*This year the charity we are supporting is*

## Riding for the Disabled, Shillington Branch

### RDA



This is a new branch of RDA being set up in Shillington and users of these new facilities will be assessed and monitored here in our village. Riding helps physically by improving core strength in the body, posture and balance. It also helps psychologically by improving confidence and attention skills. This centre will provide an opportunity for young adults as well as younger age groups. All money raised at the festival will go to this new branch of RDA in Shillington.



The festival will take place from **Friday 6th to Sunday 8th December** with all proceeds going to this charity. If you would like to enter a tree or display at the festival, you can choose any theme you wish. It could be an opportunity to advertise your own group or small business. There is no charge to participate and you would be helping to support this vital charity.

*If you would like to know more*  
please contact **Nola McCormick** on **01462 712096**.



### FESTIVAL OPENING TIMES

**Friday, 6th December: 3.30 – 5.30**

**Saturday, 7th December: 2.00 – 5.00**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December: 2.00 – 5.00**

★ Refreshments ★ Children's Tombola ★ Raffle ★

## COMING TOGETHER

by *Revd. Angus McCormick* ☎ 01462-712096

Minister of Shillington Congregationalist Church



A friend told me she had seen a young couple camp out nearby on a very cold night. She thought couldn't let them do that since she knew how very cold it was. So she invited them to stay with her in her house. They stayed for two weeks! Anyhow though they were complete strangers no harm came about. Anything could have happened. Just like crossing a busy road if you find it difficult.

Another friend came to see me specially to tell and share some really good news he wanted me to know. He felt I would be able to understand his personal joy like no one else. How very humbling and wonderful to have such sharing.

So many advertisements and appeals seem to rely on wanting to touch our sense of being able to experience another person's feelings; those who are in war zones; the homeless; animals neglected or abused; no one to talk to.



Often we spend so much time and effort wanting better facilities or keeping what we have got that some really simple and everyday human needs are overlooked. Recently I have tried to see if any help can be given locally for those of us who feel that just crossing a busy road is stressful and dangerous yet that is where the local shop is and the village hall. The challenges of just this outing is such a challenge; the volume of traffic; the speed of bikes and vehicles; the silence of traffic; difficult kerbs; no one to help; no seats; no bars to hold onto if in trouble.... thank goodness for automatic doors..... a gentle slope for access..... Anyhow so far the responses for help have been "no action required" or simply no response at all!



Well just being human is great and there are so many great human acts of kindness. I am told that the new AI technology that can do so much does not have a sense of empathy, which is that special human quality that enables us to imagine and share another's feelings for better or worse.

We are not machines and all the best efforts to have better facilities and more of what we want can still miss that real human need of the everyday life of our fellow human beings.

We can come together in unity of sharing our human spirit and needs for support, for encouragement, for just getting across the road.

I marveled recently at a programme on TV about life in India that showed how so many people crowded together did so much to help each other enjoy the day. Vehicle horns for example were sounded NOT in anger or aggression but as a gentle warning to help each other on their own journeys.

Let us come together and do more of this human sharing of pain and joy. I think it's all about love.

Every blessing, *Revd. Angus*



# CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH NEWS

47 Church Street, Shillington

www.shillingtoncong-church.org.uk

## SERVICES:

All services commence at 10.30am unless otherwise state. Visitors always welcome. If you need to contact our minister with any enquiries his number is **01462-712096**



## FUND RAISING EVENT:

On the evening of Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> October a fund raising event was held by Mrs. Sandra Hare on behalf of the Congregational Church. Permission was given to hold the event in a barn at the farm of the Redman family in Lower Gravenhurst.

A group of Ukelele players entertained approximately 70 people during the evening and enjoyed a ploughman's supper which was served. The music was foot-tapping and a few of those attending joined with the players to boost the singing. A raffle was also drawn towards the end of the evening. In the region of £600-00 was raised on behalf of the Congregational Church. Thank you to Sandra for arranging this social evening which was most enjoyable.

## FRIENDLY SPACE:

We continue hosting the Friendly Space on a Monday morning and now we have the colder weather will be opening for a longer time and offering an option of soup with a roll. The usual tea and coffee is available, friendly chat, bring your craft, or a board game to play. Small monetary donations welcome. Opening times 11.00am – 2.00pm.

## CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL:

**RDA**



The chosen charity for the Christmas Tree Festival this year is '**Riding for the Disabled Association**' that helps children and adults with physical and/or learning disabilities to ride and interact with ponies for therapy, achievement and fun. They meet at Model Farm in Hanscombe End Road, Shillington. If you wish to find out more please contact

e-mail: [stevenagerdainfo@gmail.com](mailto:stevenagerdainfo@gmail.com)

### Opening times:

Friday 6 December 3.30pm – 5.30pm

Saturday 7 December 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Sunday 8 December 2.00pm – 5.00pm

We look forward to welcoming you, refreshments available, children's tombola and a raffle. Carol Service at 5.00pm on Sunday 8 December to close the event.

## BEDFORD FOODBANK:



Thank you for the continuing support of the community with items for the Food Bank, which are gratefully received.

### Items currently in short supply:

Long Life Milk	Tinned Meat
Long Life Sponge Puddings	Tinned Rice Pudding
Jars of Coffee	Long Life Fruit Juice
Jars of Jam	Tinned Tuna
Tinned Fruit	Tin Openers





*Shillington WI is looking forward to the next few weeks as it has a great programme of events lined up. Christmas is coming!*

*Our speaker at the October meeting was nutritionist Sue Watkins. She talked about the body's immune system and how our body reacts when it's attacked by bacteria and viruses or is injured. Sue is amazingly knowledgeable – we learnt, and now understand, so much more about our immune system. Her three top tips were: drink water, drink water and drink water (2 litres).*



*At the Shillington Fireworks Spectacular, the WI cake stall was a great success. The hot chocolate was certainly very popular this year.*

*Our craft evening in November was enjoyed by all. WI members made beautiful cards for birthdays and Christmas. Some embroidered the later using embroidery thread. They all looked fantastic!*

*For Shillington WI, Christmas celebrations start with the creation of a lovely, unusual tree for the Christmas Tree Festival on the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December. We are looking forward to a Christmas Meal at The Crown, Henlow and a visit to the Wimpole Christmas Lights later in the month.*



*We are welcoming the Sloop Groggy Dogs to our December meeting, which is on the 12<sup>th</sup> (the second Thursday of the month rather than the first one). They entertained everyone at Shillingfest this year so we know we are in for a great time. As it happens, it is also Christmas Jumper Day.*

*Our January 2025 meeting is on the 9<sup>th</sup> (the second Thursday of the month). We are holding a Quiz Night. Members can bring along any unopened packets of mince pies, cakes, crisps and other goodies left over from Christmas to share with everyone.*

*Plans are afoot for a trip to the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre to see 'Birdsong' in February 2025.*

*Shillington WI wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*



*Our meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month in the Congregational Church at 7.30 p.m. Visitors are very welcome (£4).*

*For further information please contact:*

**Julia Bruce, President** ☎ **01462 712412** or  
**Liza Starling, Secretary** - [lastarling@outlook.com](mailto:lastarling@outlook.com)

# ACTIVE HOPE FOR 2025

By Annie Palmer (WI Ambassador for Climate Change) [anniejpalmer@hotmail.com](mailto:anniejpalmer@hotmail.com)

As I've got older, I sound more and more like my mum. I find myself saying the same things. When anything goes pear-shaped, I say "these things are sent to try us" and I hear Mum. During those murky days in November, I went around muttering "this weather puts years on me". She also used to say this .... and I sounded just like her!



When Trump won the US Election with a landslide victory, I was shocked. I said to myself "what is the world coming to?" (Mum again).

Trump now has, like our government, a mandate to totally wreck the planet. He will drill, drill, drill and Labour will build, build, build (thereby wrecking what's left of nature in the UK). I really hope I'm wrong about this but I'm not holding my breath.

It was at this time that a friend told me about a book she was reading. It was called: 'Active Hope. How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power'. It sounded like something I needed to read so I got a copy. Some might think it's a bit 'way-out man' - that's given away my age - but it's thought-provoking, honest and in parts inspiring.

Hope is the feeling of expectation that things are going to get better. When facing the mess we are in, it is difficult for most of us to have that feeling. Fears for our future are often considered too uncomfortable to talk about. People say things like "don't go there, it's too depressing" or "we can't change anything so what's the point in discussing it?". As it says in 'Active Hope': "The problem with this approach is that it closes down our conversations and our thinking. How can we even begin to tackle the mess we're in if we consider it too depressing to think about or discuss? This blocked communication generates a peril even more deadly, for the greatest danger of our times is the deadening of our response".

The word 'hope' has two different meanings. "Passive hope is about waiting for external agencies to bring about what we desire. Active Hope is about becoming active participants in the process of moving toward our hopes. Active Hope is a practice. Like tai chi or gardening, it is something we *do* rather than *have*".



I've used the following quote by Bob Marley before but it is appropriate here: "You never know how strong you are, until being strong is your only choice". He's right. When the chips are down, we discover strengths we never knew we had.



Thinking of Active Hope, an action that is fun and easy to do is to carry out wildlife surveys in our gardens, streets, fields etc. Beds Bird Club are carrying out a Winter Garden Bird Feeding Survey. You can download a form from their website. As well as birds, recording sightings (date, place and time) of bats, foxes, hedgehogs, frogs, butterflies and moths, deer, etc., is also important. I'm not tech-savvy but I understand there are apps that are great for recording wildlife.

Developers' ecological surveys of sites are carried out over a few days. The data that we collect will have been collected over many months so will be more accurate and comprehensive. When it comes to fighting unsustainable development, it's another weapon in our armoury.

Happy Christmas and all the best for 2025. May your Christmas and New Year be full of fun and active hope.

*Annie x*

# SHILLINGTON MEN'S CLUB

(Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year)

<https://Shillingtonmensclub.co.uk>

On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 20 members attended an evening meal at the Three Horse Shoes in Norton. It was a two course meal of Sausages & Mash or Fish & Chips followed by Sticky Toffee Pudding or Fruit Crumble and finishing with Coffee. We all had a great time. Thank you to Stewart Rataj and Colin Hands for organising this event. Sean Williams won the raffle.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> October members enjoyed a lunch social at The View in Pegsdon. Thank You to Stewart Rataj for organising this event.

Our first cultural visit of the month was for our "Petrolheads" within our club, who enjoyed a visit to the McClaren & Aston Martin dealership in Hatfield on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October. They were given a tour and talk about the cars and had the opportunity to get up close and personal to them. Thank you to Michael Bradley and Kevin Johnson for organising this very popular event.



Our next event took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> November at The Green Man at Stanford. 14 members enjoyed a two-course meal of Sausage & Mash & Onion Gravy or Bacon Chop, Egg & Chips, followed by Sticky Toffee Sponge & Custard or Ice Cream. We had our own designated room and received excellent service, what more do you want! Thank you to Stewart and Colin for organising this event which I'm sure we will return to next year. Kevin Johnson won the raffle.



On the 21<sup>st</sup> November 12 members enjoyed a trip to the Tring Micro Brewery. They had a tour of the brewery and talk about the ingredients which go into the different brews. They then enjoyed sampling the brews in the bar on site over a Fish & Chip Supper brought into them from a local "Chippy". Everyone had a great time. Thank you to Michael Bradley for organising this event.

## Future events:

- 11<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas party at The View in Pegsdon.
- 8<sup>th</sup> January - evening meal at The Raven in Hexton.
- 5<sup>th</sup> February – "Kick Off" party at the Congregational Church.
- 12<sup>th</sup> February - evening meal at The Crown at Henlow.

## Membership:

Current membership is 43 members. There are 8 elected Committee members who meet every 12 weeks to review and evaluate past events, plan future events and review the Club's finances.

The Club offers members a bi-monthly opportunity to socialise and enjoy friendly conversation and comradeship over a good pub meal and beverages or a visit to a place of cultural or historical interest. This is the essence of the Club. New members are warmly welcomed, so any new residents to the village, please take the opportunity to embrace village life, meet local people and come along and see what the Club has to offer! Membership is £5 to join with an Annual Membership of £15.



## Contacts:

Events Co-ordinator - Michael Bradley  
(01462 711162)

Email - [michael894bradley@btinternet.com](mailto:michael894bradley@btinternet.com)

Chairman – Kevin Johnson  
(07748-525233)

Email – [kevinjohnson360@msn.com](mailto:kevinjohnson360@msn.com)

## TREE PLANTING PROJECT ON UPTON END ROAD – AND THAT’S A WRAP

Nicola wrote an update on this at the beginning of the year and we can now report on this final phase. The 27 acres is split over three fields, with the largest, central field being the one with by far the worst survival rate. We’re happy with the density on the other two fields but we were considering planting the middle field again and decided to go ahead with this.



We contacted The Woodland Trust, who provided the original ‘trees’, and they routinely offer to contribute half the cost of replanting an area. But, it’s very much the same setup - bare whips and they could fit us in in March 2025. Neither of us could stomach the thought of another dry spell wiping these out as well, so we decided to go it alone, with the planters who put in the original trees. They were very helpful, in two ways. Firstly, the whips supplied by the Trust are the very cheapest option, but have poorest survival rates, even when conditions are perfect. The better option is to use what are called ‘cell-grown’ plants that are propagated in the same way you would prick out seedlings into trays. Secondly, timing. The planters agreed to start in October, so that the plants would have sufficient moisture and time to develop their roots for next Spring. All the rain we’ve been having has had a silver lining because the ground is nicely soft. Not waterlogged though, which is probably why the middle field had poorer results in a dry spell.

We calculated that we needed roughly 3500 trees, spread across the same species as we originally planted, so oak, wild cherry, sweet chestnut, etc. These arrived the first week of October and were planted in the second week by our happy team of planters. This hardy bunch roam the country, planting trees in all weathers. They also told us that most of the trees they’d planted in 2022 had died off, and were surprised so many of ours had survived. Hopefully this 2024 batch of trees will fare better; they certainly looked far healthier than the whips, most of them having leaves. In the meantime, it’s obvious that a few of the 2022 vintage trees have beaten the odds and grown spectacularly well, shooting well above the tops of the protective tubes. In fact the original planting isn’t as dire as we first thought and many of the plants we’d written off have now established as healthy trees and shrubs, it just took them longer to get there than we expected. Honestly, if they were garden plants you’d have consigned them to the compost heap long ago. It must be a tree thing.



For the first time since we began this project, we came away confident that there’ll be a wood there in years to come. In 2022 it was the Woodland Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council who provided the money to plant. This time we bore the cost ourselves, a not inconsiderable £10,000 all in. But the knowledge that we can do no more to ensure that these plants survive is priceless. And we prefer to think of this as an investment anyway.



Our sincere thanks to all of you who’ve provided trees for this project, we’re really very grateful. And you’re welcome to check on progress yourselves. It’s on Upton End Road, more or less opposite Bury Road, with three bollards at the entrance to discourage future fly-tipping episodes. But do take stout clothing since wild really does mean wild, and the thistles have had a field day!

*Kevin Johnson & Nicola Mallard*

# SHILLINGTON SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

MEET AT

## SHILLINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Monday afternoons - 2.00-5.00pm // Friday evenings - 7.15-9.15pm



*We are now back playing short mat bowls and have commenced our in-house triples league competition.*

*We are also taking part in the Barnet and Wilstead Leagues. We have two teams in each league, Shillington Black and Shillington Red represent the club at Hatfield for the Barnet League, and the Scarecrows and Wickers for the Wilstead League.*

*Some members have also been taking part in the Hertfordshire County Championships. Congratulations to Julia Bruce and her partner who finished second, Trevor Knight & Tony Duke for their fourth place in the over 55's pairs competition. Also to Trevor Knight, Michelle Conlon & Neil Rixon who finished third in the triples competition. Hopefully all these teams will get the opportunity to represent the club and county at the national competition in Melton Mowbray in spring 2025.*

*We now have 7 club members playing for Hertfordshire County, and 1 club member in the England Ladies team, so we are spreading the name of our small village club far and wide.*

*Anyone interested in joining the club is welcome to come and have a try (for free) to see if they like it. We have spare sets of bowls available and you only need to have a flat pair of shoes with you to enable you to play. You can either turn up to the village hall on a Monday afternoon or a Friday evening, or if you prefer call or message Michelle (contact details below) in advance.*

*Experienced members provide support and guidance for new and developing players and members can join in with regular county playing and learning activities at the County venues in Hatfield and Stevenage.*



*For further information please contact*  
**Michelle Conlon** (☎ 07974-772702) [conlonmichelle@sky.com](mailto:conlonmichelle@sky.com)  
Or **Derek Lewison** (☎ 01462 711504)

## HOLDING ON ..... TO OUR PRECIOUS CHURCH ON THE HILL

### Events

I am delighted to be able to report that Joy to the World V was a huge success with over 100 people in attendance on both nights and close to £3,000 raised. This was only possible through the generosity (and talent) of our wonderful performers, the support of our many local businesses and the energy and enthusiasm of the concert's prime mover, Joy Robertson.

Thank you to everyone who attended and the many volunteers who helped the event to run seamlessly. Thanks to Phil Dickson-Earle, who masterminded the visual displays, the whole concert is now available to view on his YouTube channel: - [\(2660\) Phil Dickson-Earle - YouTube](#)



By the time you read this, the members of the Friends' Committee will have put up a **Christmas tree** in the War Memorial Garden again this year.

Advance notice of our first big event for 2025. Following on from the success of the 1970s disco, we will be having a **1980s vinyl disco in the Village Hall on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February.**

### Website

Please do take a look at our new(ish) website for details of all past, current and future projects and for all our forthcoming events and activities: -

<https://foas-shillington.org.uk/>

## Projects

As I reported in the last Parish News, we have received the architect's report of the Quinquennial Inspection and, as ever, there is much work to do. The Friends will be working closely with the PCC to prioritise the works and I will be able to update you all on our more detailed plans for 2025 in the next edition.

There are some major jobs to do, but you will also be able to see plenty of progress on a series of smaller jobs, including: -

- Repairs to the Bellringers' window arch
- Replacing coping stones on 'Postgate's Folly'
- Plasterwork repairs around the south porch
- Repairs and improvements in the Bell Tower

**Many thanks for all your past and future support for our iconic 'Church on the Hill' and may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

**Andy Gibbs,**

**Friends of All Saints' Church  
(bazwell2@gmail.com)**



## How you can support the work of the Friends

As ever, we are always keen for more people to join our happy little band. If you would like to get involved, please do get in touch. We are on the lookout for: -

- New Committee members,
- People who could help at events and activities,
- 'Specialists' who could help with specific projects, such as publicity, events management, fundraising or IT.

**If you could help in any of these ways, would like to know more about what we do or would simply like to make a donation towards our work, please contact our membership Secretary, Jackie Fletcher on 07485617556 or email foass@outlook.com**

## Sponsor a Bell at All Saints'

The five bells of All Saints' Church have been an ever-present joyful sound in the village for hundreds of years.

Robust though they are, they are complex 'machines' and do need occasional repairs.

**We are looking for generous sponsors to help us repair and maintain them so we can keep ringing for many more years to come.**

**With last year's sponsorship we were able to replace a number of stays, install a bell rope 'spider' and begin the process of refurbishing the clappers.**

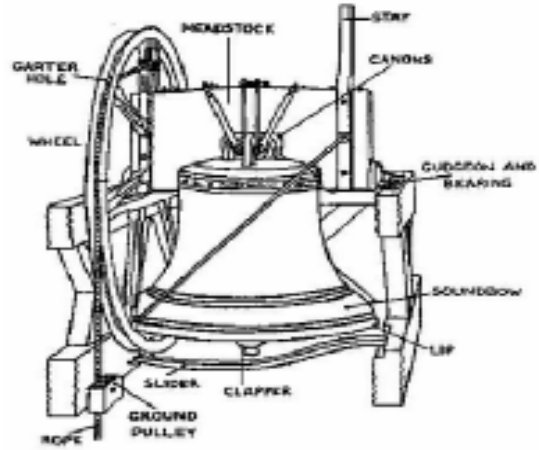
For a donation of £50 a year you will receive: -

- An entry on our Honours Board in the Church acknowledging your donation,
- A guided tour of the Church and the bell tower including (if you have a head for heights) a chance to 'meet' the bells,
- Free bellringing tuition (for life!)

You can sponsor a bell as: -

- An individual,
- A family,
- A business,
- An organisation,
- A unique gift – Perfect as a Christmas present!

For more information, please contact Andy Gibbs: [hazwell2@gmail.com](mailto:hazwell2@gmail.com) - 07922017051



## ALL SAINTS ILLUMINATED

To celebrate or commemorate your special occasion please contact:

**Catherine** on **07710-823384**

or e-mail [catherine.scleater@btinternet.com](mailto:catherine.scleater@btinternet.com)

It only costs **£25** to sponsor a whole week's illumination - a perfect way to commemorate a special family occasion or loved one's anniversary.

Sponsor	Message	From	To
Andy & Cheryl Gibbs	In memory of Henry "Harry" Gibbs. 10 <sup>th</sup> December 1924 – 27 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	Sunday 8 December	Saturday 14 December
Sally Fossey	In memory of my son Craig and wonderful dad Ron. We love and miss you both very much. God bless. With love Sally, Christine, Daniel and all the family.	Sunday 22 December	Saturday 28 December
All Saints' Church Shillington	Wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you to all our sponsors of the lighting of the Church.	Sunday 22 December	Saturday 4 January





## ANDREW ELLIMAN

### 100 MILE FUNDRAISING HIKE for AARON

Dear Friends of Shillington and neighbouring villages and towns

As we head into November and steadily onto the festive season of December, I look to embark on a new challenge which will entail a 100 mile hike over various locations in the UK, right up to the 25th December, dressed as Santa and with my trusted helper Heidi (my dog).

The locations will vary, but I will be starting on the 16<sup>th</sup> November, where we will be hiking along the world heritage site of the Jurassic Coastal Path in Dorset/Devon. Then, locations will include London, Birmingham, Peak District, The Chiltern Hills and the finale will be hiking from Carmarthen Castle on the north coast of Wales to the summit of Snowdon (Wales' highest mountain) and back down into Llanberis. In total we will cover over 100 miles, come sunshine, rain, snow, daylight or darkness.

Why, you ask?

Well, it's all to help raise funds for a very special young man, who lives not too far from my house. His name is Aaron Nahani and in April this year at the age of 18 years old, he was diagnosed with high grade Glioma and as you can imagine this has turned his and his family's world upside down. Aaron was a very healthy young man, played rugby for a number of years and for not for one minute did his family think that he would be diagnosed with cancer.



Unfortunately the NHS in the UK are unable to offer any alternative treatments, other than chemo, which he is currently having. Sadly, there are other treatments approved in Germany available, but are not approved in the UK. The family are trying to raise funds for Aaron to receive Dendric cell therapy in Germany. Over there this therapy has been used for a number of years with proven results. Aaron desperately needs our help and so this is why I'm taking on the Santa hiking challenge.

Please "**I NEED YOUR HELP**" to give a gift donation this festive season and to help Aaron to get the treatment he needs. I will keep you posted with our walks/hikes and post photos on the Village Facebook page.



I'm actually looking to do a 4 hour hike from Shillington up to the summit of Pegsdon Hills and back via Pirton on Sunday the **8<sup>th</sup> December**. So, if you would like to join me (all are welcome, including dogs), all I ask is you make a donation on the link.

To donate, please click on the link on the village facebook page or google:

<https://www.gofundme.com/.../raising-money-for-aaron-to-receive-cancer-treatment-abroad...>

I thank you in advance from the bottom of my heart.

*Andrew*



**Would you know what to do in a 999 life-threatening emergency?**

**Would you know how to recognise a heart attack or cardiac arrest ?**

**Would you know how & when to do CPR and how to use a defibrillator ?**

*If the answer is yes, then thank you. If it's no, then we want to help you.*

*Our aim at EEAST Heart is to give as many members of the public as possible an awareness of what to do in a medical emergency, what actions to take and when, and to give them the courage and confidence to make potentially life changing decisions to help those who need it most.*

*Basic Life Support awareness courses are provided free, ensuring they are accessible to all and will be delivered by local community first responders who are all volunteers trained by the East of England ambulance service.*

*Sessions can be run for 2 to 20 people, at a time to suit you and can be tailored to meet your group's needs, interests and requirements.*

*All we need is an hour of your time and we can show you how to save a life.  
And it's FREE!*

**John Nelms**

**☎ 07890-553220**

**John.nelms@eastamb.nhs.uk**

***Ambulance service community first responder and EEAST heart awareness volunteer  
(and Shillington resident)***

## **SHILLINGTON VILLAGE HALL UPDATE**

*Registered charity: 300066*



Thanks for all the support this year with the various fundraising events we've been involved in; donations made; or making use of the clothing bank (we get paid for the weight of the clothes collected from the bin - £142.40 for June to October period – keep refreshing your wardrobe!). Thanks also to the user groups and families for making regular bookings in this much loved village facility.

A big thank you to local volunteer Bill Gearing for keeping the frontage and car park tidy and weed free and to our cleaner Yvonne.

We were very pleased to be able to have the new roof this year, thanks to a lot of hard work by our retired Chair Sylvia, and are now looking at repainting the inside areas, purchasing screen and projector equipment and investing in wifi.

We are a small committee and working without a Chair at the moment. We could really do with more trustees to help us maintain and improve this important village facility. We meet every 2 months and hope to do more fund raising over the coming year. If you feel you could step up, please contact any of the current committee:

**Sally 07711-504489/Denise 07414-513683/Katie 07974-676089/Mags 07743-009076**



PLEASE COME TO

# Christmas Fayre

HELD AT:  
All Saints Church

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**Saturday December 7th, 2024**

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Shillington  
12:00pm- 3:30pm

FOOD SERVED FROM 12:00PM

MULLED WINE

STALLS

GAMES

RAFFLE



# FUNDRAISING FOR VILLAGE HALL IMPROVEMENTS



**SATURDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

**SHILLINGTON VILLAGE HALL, SG5 3LL**  
*Doors open 7.00pm – Music from 7.30pm*

***Tickets: £10***

**Sally 07711-504489 ★ Denise 07414-513683 ★ Mags 07743-009076**

**★ Licensed Bar ★ Raffle ★**

**FYNNIUS FOGG - BEDFORD'S OLDEST BOY BAND !!**

# **TWO MICE & ONE PAIR OF GLASSES**

*(Two members of Mice with Glasses)*

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 24 from 9pm  
SHILLINGTON SOCIAL CLUB**



***Alternate Acoustic Songs with a few  
Christmas Surprises thrown In***



# RAMBLING ON with DEREK TURNER

☎ 01462-712462

[derek.turner@phonecoop.coop](mailto:derek.turner@phonecoop.coop)

One of the disadvantages of growing up in a small settlement is a lack of other children to play with. Ours lived in Pegsdon when they were young and the first thing they did when we moved into Bury Road was to head 'up the meadow'. We soon realised that this meant the playing field where others of a similar age congregated. Three decades earlier, I had lived in a similar-sized hamlet and with no other children my age, I spent a lot of time on my own, wandering dreamily through the fields, climbing trees, walking along the usually-dry stream-bed and exploring the pits that dotted the landscape at that time. It was said that some of them were bomb craters where



the wartime enemy had failed to find their intended target, presumably Vauxhall in Luton, and decided to dump their explosives anywhere before heading home. Looking back though, it's clear that most were places where people had extracted sand and gravel, clay or chalk for reasons that didn't concern me at the time.

Several years elapsed without me thinking much about the ground beneath my feet until the geography teacher at my Stevenage secondary school told me something surprising. A massive glacier had bulldozed its way across the country slicing the tops off hills over a quarter of a million years earlier. It spilled over the top of the chalk hills and then wore a deep valley where Stevenage stands now. A borehole by the post office near the school revealed that the white chalk that formed the surrounding hills was 92 feet (about 28 metres) below ground at that point. It transpired that there had once been a deep valley where the Old Town stood. Later, when the climate warmed, the glacier melted and dropped vast amounts of material that it had devoured which partially refilled the valley. I was astounded that such extreme cold had once gripped the area and that the landscape could change so profoundly. These glacial deposits also explained why I had seen sand, gravel or clay pits close to chalk pits.

School trips and holidays took me around the country and opened my eyes to the rocks that existed there. They were very different from the chalk I knew and many made a huge impact on the landscape. In Wales, they included the coal that Mr. Munns from Stevenage delivered to my childhood home and which sparingly augmented the wood that heated it. Unlike anything around here, the collieries where it was extracted had spinning metal wheels on top and huge, dark conical spoil heaps nearby. In Cornwall, similar-sized heaps were white and it transpired that they were the waste where china clay was quarried for the pottery industry in Stoke-on-Trent where it was made in huge bottle-shaped kilns. I discovered granite and basalt, both hard rocks with a volcanic origin that were quarried for road surfaces.



Elsewhere, other quarries supplied iron ore which if heated in massive furnaces released metal for making steel. In some places, there were pits for clay for making bricks and or where stone was extracted and used in railway viaducts or buildings. It came in a huge array of colours - dark grey in Yorkshire, light-grey or honey-hued in the Cotswolds and red in Nottingham or Glasgow. These rocks were made of different materials and created in very different environments. Yorkshire limestone contained the bony and shelly remains of creatures that lived in a muddy sea whereas a much clearer warmer sea produced Cotswold stone. The red rock was made of sand from a baking hot desert.

Even more extraordinary were the ages of these rocks which were measured in hundreds of millions of years.

Their structures and the fossils they contained told us about the restless history of the Earth where, given enough time, land masses drifted across the globe and bumped into one another and rocks were destroyed and new ones created. The relatively stable conditions that we enjoy here in the British Isles contrast strongly with those in parts of the globe bedevilled by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the tsunamis that they trigger, which indicate that these processes are continuing today.

I also discovered that rocks influence lots of other things including the soils that form above them and what will grow on them. Heather prefers sandy soils and roses, clay, while many types of orchid favour limestone and chalk. Cereal crops needed reasonably well-drained land and in contrast, grassland and woods usually lie on clay that drains poorly and is difficult to cultivate. Because much wildlife had an affinity for certain plants which provided homes or food for it or for its young, geology has an impact there too. In fact, geology affects almost everything from agriculture to industry to the sites where castles were built and the routes of canals.



After I retired, I explored Bedfordshire and discovered more rocks, some of which appear here in Shillington. Lower Greensand forms the low hills that you cross on the way to Bedford after leaving Clophill or Shefford and provided the brown stone at All Saints Church. Chalk forms the hills at Pegsdon and along the Chilterns but only some of it is useful as building stone. Some of the external stonework and the huge internal columns and arches inside the church are pale grey 'clunch' or Totternhoe Stone (named after the village where huge amounts have been quarried since Roman times). 'Ours' may have come from a pit at Pegsdon which is no longer there as it was filled in around 50 years ago. When used outside, 'clunch' can weather badly and much has been replaced, most recently around the north door using intricately-carved cream limestone from the Bath area. Gault clay appears in the lighter-coloured or pink bricks that were often used around the village although glacial clay made the red bricks in the top of the church tower.

Will the children of today take an interest in geology like I did? The willingness of parents to let their children roam free like I could has changed and most of the old pits that gave me a taste of what lay beneath the soil have gone anyway. However, when you talk about dinosaurs, young ears may prick up. The fossils of their huge bones occur rarely in this country but smaller ones from other creatures are more common. One of the pioneers of fossil collecting was Mary Anning who found plenty of specimens on the beaches of Dorset. An exhibition in the Higgins Museum & Art Gallery in Bedford celebrates her extraordinary life and an ammonite and other fossils are on display. I recommend taking your young people there before it closes on 5 January.



### **Good news about Strawberry Hill!**



One of the most surprising places that I discovered when I began to explore Bedfordshire was Strawberry Hill Farm at Knotting. In the August edition of *Rambling On*, I wrote about the Wildlife Trust's plan to purchase the area where the owner had stopped farming its 150 hectares over 25 years ago. With no active management, scrub grew, wildflowers reappeared and birds, butterflies and other life flourished. I am pleased to report that fundraising was successful and the area - nearly twice the size of the Trust's holding at Pegsdon - is safe in perpetuity.

If you made a donation well done! It's quite a drive to go there to help as a volunteer but there's room for you to augment the team that helps at Pegsdon on the second Sunday and final Wednesday each month. Get in touch with me if you'd like to join in on Sunday 8 December or on Wednesday 18 (a week earlier than usual to avoid Christmas).

# PLOUGHING ON.....A Farmer's Perspective !

by **Whizz – T. C. Shaw & Sons**

[www.shawfarming.com](http://www.shawfarming.com)

[www.mrsmiddleton.co.uk](http://www.mrsmiddleton.co.uk)

They say that time flies when you're having fun, so we must have been having a lot of fun because somehow it has been 18 months since I last wrote Ploughing On! Thanks to a super visit to Wild About Pirton recently, I have been spurred into action and thought it was about time that I updated you on what has been going on on the farm.

Since harvest we have had both floods and a very dry spell, resulting in an incessant and somewhat frustrating drilling season, but thanks to the hard work of the team on the farm the seed is now all in the ground. The seedbeds aren't quite how we would like them to be (some are almost non-existent!) but the resilient seeds are already growing and the fields are greening up. This year we have sown a lot more milling wheat than usual. Although it is harder to grow and costs more because of higher inputs, it attracts a premium when we sell it as it can go into the bread-making market.

The oilseed rape that we cut this Summer yielded well, thanks to a lower level of Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle and fewer pigeons. Most days through the late Winter we check whether the pigeons are eating the crop and if so, scare them off. I discovered that a small, young and energetic black labrador is an excellent addition to what is known on our farm as "pigeon patrol"!



You may have seen on social media that we had a huge fire on the farm in August. Not only was it the largest field fire that we have ever had but it was also believed to have been arson, which makes it even worse. The fire spread very quickly as it was a warm, windy day, burning around 300 acres of land and destroying a significant number of straw bales. Bedfordshire Fire Service was absolutely brilliant; they reacted incredibly quickly and efficiently to put out the fire. At one point we had every fire truck in the county on site, plus a drone looking for hot spots and tens of firefighters working tirelessly. We also had help from our neighbour who came bursting through the hedge on his tractor and cultivated some firebreaks. It was fascinating to watch all the action from afar but something that I do not want to experience again.

This week I did something that I did not think I would be doing; heading into London in my wellies! Not because of the unexpected snow (although the choice of footwear was quite handy for the cold, wet weather!) but to join the thousands of farmers and those involved in agriculture who gathered in Westminster to let the government know what they think of the recent changes in rules and regulations. The issue with Inheritance Tax is sadly the final straw of what has been a battering of new rules which have all had a major impact on how we live and work.

As you all know, the main aim of farming is food production; the UK produces some of the best food in the world, obeying strict Red Tractor guidelines all the way through the growing process. We import 50% of the grains used in this country and very little of this would get through the Red Tractor standards.





If you were to breakdown how our time is spent on the farm, however, a huge proportion is dedicated to non-food related activities, such as cutting hedges and maintaining footpaths, managing environmental projects and planting trees and hedgerows, reporting and clearing up fly-tipping and keeping our farms safe from the constant threat of rural crime. If the farm cannot function as a successful business, it is not just food production that will suffer but the management of the countryside as a whole.

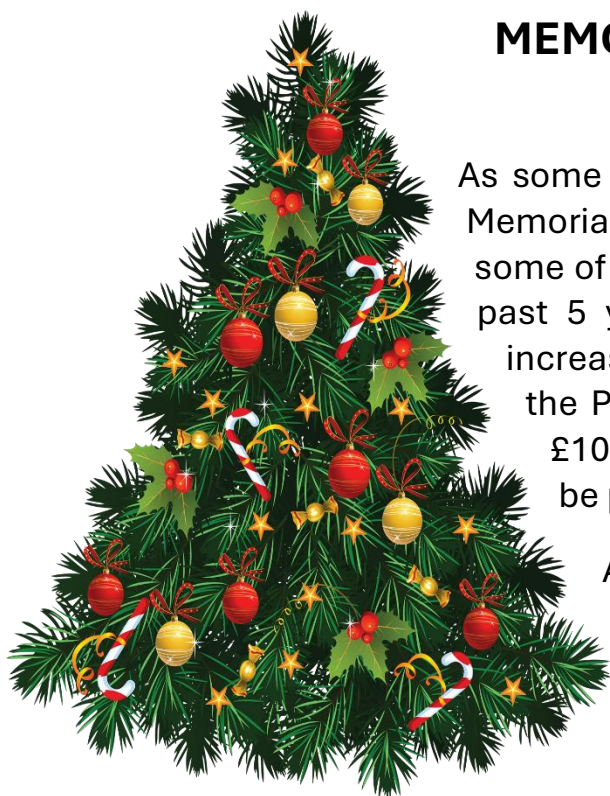
The lack of funding available now (for instance Central Beds no longer pay us to cut the footpaths, it is a cost we bear) and increase in taxes and levies mean that the whole industry is on its knees.

Thankfully the farming industry has had amazing support from the general public and other industries and being at the rally in London felt crucial. The people there were full of passion, anger and frustration, but it was also peaceful, friendly and reassuring. Everywhere you looked, the protesters were chatting to the police and passersby and according to the organisers, there wasn't any litter dropped.

People arrived with armfuls of fresh food (6.6 tonnes in total!) which was donated to London food banks to provide 15,000 meals; a wonderful gesture from so many farmers gathering in one place. And to me, evidence that farmers just want to continue what we have always done, which is produce food, look after the countryside and support the country.



## **MEMORIAL GARDEN CHRISTMAS TREE 2025 AND BEYOND**



As some of you may be aware the Christmas Tree in the Memorial Garden has been purchased and erected by some of the members of The Friends Committee over the past 5 years raising funds for local charities. Due to increasing costs to purchase these trees - (15ft = £250), the Parish Council has agreed to a one time grant of £100 for this year and future purchases of the tree will be passed out to the village community.

A small committee has been formed from The Friends and Village Hall Committee and we will be approaching local businesses and shaking collection pots at public events to raise funds for the annual tree purchase.

We feel sure the village would like to continue with this now established tradition and look forward to your support.

# PEGSDON VIEW



I'm writing this on the day the first snow of the season fell, it was a delightful surprise this morning. The Pegsdon Hills were hiding amongst the clouds first thing, there would've been no view at the top, but my garden looked lovely with its snowy blanket. Just a few days ago I thought we were having an unusually long autumn, and now all of a sudden it feels like we're in midwinter.

The work in the garden continues, we're learning lots as we try to identify shrubs and decide if they are staying, going or just need a good prune. We're uncovering some hidden gems as we go along, benefitting from all the plant choices from the previous occupants, but also trying to find space for our own choices. My husband and I took Donna's advice from the last edition regarding planting trees.

We did a bit of research and made a list of good options with assistance from the RHS website, then the fun bit, touring garden centres to see if we could find any of them. We struck lucky with a couple of ornamental cherries on the list, at a discount. I think our timing was perfect, all the garden centres had brilliant sale offers on.



In the ground they went with a little bit of plant food and to our surprise one of them has flowered already - not the one that is supposed to flower in the winter though!

I am sad to report another car accident on the Hitchin Road. A car failed to round a bend and instead went through the hedgerow, no serious injuries and no other vehicles involved. We continue to investigate what we might be able to do to make the road safer.



We had a lovely bulb planting session on a sunny October day around the village in the hopes of some more colour next Spring. Massive thanks to Steve, Claire, Sharon, Alex and Mel for the hard work, hot drinks and pastries.

Lastly, a reminder that there's lots going on at The View in the run up to Christmas including live music, a quiz and an excellent Christmas menu, it promises to be a great festive season.



Wishing you all safe and well, *Caroline*



# The Friendly Place

Winter schedule

From December 2<sup>nd</sup>

Mondays, 11:00am to 14:00pm

At the Congregational Church, Shillington

Join us for tea, coffee, soup and a roll and friendly chat.

Hosted by Linda and Trish of All Saint's church and Angus and Nola of the Congregational church, Shillington.

We can give you a lift if you need transport



For more information you can call Linda; 01462 711761  
or Trish; 07754760073



# 1<sup>ST</sup> SHILLINGTON GUIDES AND RANGERS

This term the Guides and Rangers have enjoyed expressing their creativity! Rachel – a Ranger mum - came in to run some pottery workshops. The Guides made and glazed pumpkins and the Rangers made Christmas trees. Thank you Rachel, for helping them to make such amazing creations!

We've also tested out some of the new interest badges that Girlguiding are introducing next year. The Guides had fun trying out macrophotography, making pooters (bug catchers) and bug hotels, as well as hunting for bugs in the dark. The Rangers tested the new Fandoms badge, sharing their passions with each other – which ranged from Percy Pig to Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

We celebrated Parliament Week with a debating session, making models of the Palace of Westminster from biscuits and a recorded video from our MP, Blake Stephenson, who answered the questions the Guides and Rangers had sent him. We found out that he has got lost in the House of Commons, is passionate about protecting the countryside, loves a Snickers bar and that he once worked at a scrapyard!

The Rangers have been working towards their Hot Chocolate badge – they have made mug cakes, run a hot chocolate (with all the trimmings) café for the Guides, made chocolate cloud dough and will be decorating mugs. Meanwhile, the Guides have been focussed on confectionery. They have made armpit fudge and will be having a Bake Off style “technical bake” to make gingerbread cookies.

Our main trip out this term was to join the rest of the division at Thorpe Park on a very rainy day. Plus, the Rangers have been to an escape room and the Guides have enjoyed trampolining!



*If you are interested in adding your daughter to our waiting list for joining our friendly unit, or would like more information, please email: [shillingtonguides@gmail.com](mailto:shillingtonguides@gmail.com).*

*Guides are aged 10-14 years, but younger girls can be on our waiting list.*

*Rangers are aged 14-18 years.*

*Our Guides and Rangers come from Shillington and the surrounding area, including Gravenhurst, Meppershall, Stondon, Clifton, Henlow and Shefford.*



## 1<sup>ST</sup> SHILLINGTON RAINBOWS

1<sup>st</sup> Shillington Rainbows have had a busy, fun-filled term and welcomed nine new Rainbows. We started the term with a 'talk like a pirate' evening, where we learnt some pirate jokes, coloured in balancing parrots and sang pirate songs.

The Rainbows achieved their Network Stage 1 Skills Builder this term, which included building robots out of household packaging and making musical shakers.

In November we had a fireworks themed evening, where the Rainbows made edible sparklers, conducted a firework-themed science experiment and created chalk-smudge firework art. They also learnt about fire safety, with everyone achieving the fireworks challenge badge.



We celebrated Parliament Week by learning about different government departments, using a voting slip and ballot box to choose what challenge badge they want to do next term and coming up with small changes they would like the government to implement.

The Rainbows are very keen on looking after the environment as their suggestions included having more butterflies and using our cars less by taking public transport!

In December, we will be finishing our term by doing the Fruit and Veg interest badge, Christmas craft and a Norway themed party, as well as a trip to the cinema to see Moana 2 with other local Guiding units and sections. Our main trip out this term was going to Gulliver's Land, where we went on a number of rides – the girls' favourite was the Tree Top Swings.

*If you are interested in registering your daughter to join our waiting list then use the following link: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-a-child/>  
Our Rainbows are aged between 5-7 years, but do get your child's names on our waiting list at a younger age if you want a place once they are 5.*

*Our girls come from Shillington and the surrounding area, including Stondon, Henlow Camp, Meppershall, Shefford and Gravenhurst.*

*We are always looking for adult and young volunteers and welcome girls who would like to volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award.*

*If you are interested and want to find out more then email us at*

*[shillingtonrainbow@gmail.com](mailto:shillingtonrainbow@gmail.com)*



## SHILLINGTON CHILDMINDERS

*Childminders provide safe, friendly home environments for children to play and have fun whilst gently learning through their play. We take children on outings to farms, play centres, splash parks, museums and libraries, as well as teach them life skills such as helping to do shopping, gardening and cooking.*

*We are individually registered to Ofsted, have public liability insurance, follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, undertake regular training including Safeguarding and First Aid and receive regular newsletters and bulletins from professional organisations.*

*We provide the children with opportunities to learn social skills and experience different play resources at baby/toddler groups and other settings. We are able to cover holidays and other absences for each other where possible.*

*Some of us are able to provide up to 15 hours of free childcare a week for eligible 2 year olds, as soon as care starts, in the same way that nurseries and pre-schools can. We are also able to provide the free sessions for all 3 and 4 year olds; at least 15 hours per week or up to 30 hours per week (for 38 weeks of the year) depending on parental eligibility and the childminder's policy. The free sessions normally start the term after the child's 3rd birthday. There may be additional charges to cover e.g. food and outings.*

*We each have differing childcare availability such as before and after school care, daytime childcare, overnight childcare, ad-hoc care or flexible care e.g. for shift workers.*

*Please contact us as below if you have any childcare requirements for now or the future:*

<p>Katie Brettell 07974-676089 <a href="mailto:katiebrettell@icloud.com">katiebrettell@icloud.com</a></p>	<p>Carli Mauger 07912-549931 <a href="mailto:carlimauger@gmail.com">carlimauger@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Deb Pateman 07934-480446 <a href="mailto:debpateman@msn.com">debpateman@msn.com</a></p>
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The first term of this year has absolutely flown by and we have already achieved so much.

The children took part in a Remembrance assembly where each class produced a piece of work to present to the rest of the school to remember our fallen. Two of our children, along with Mrs Young laid a wreath on behalf of the school at the church on Remembrance Sunday.

We are still arranging school tours for prospective Reception 2025 children. If you or someone you know has a child born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 the deadline for applying for a school place is Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Applications can be made through the Central Bedfordshire website.

<https://cbc.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Synergy/Parents/default.aspx>

For Children in Need this year the theme was 'spot-tacular' and the children raised £105.71 in total. They also took part in the BBC 'Bear-pees' challenge as part of their PE lessons.

We are beginning to take enquiries for the Pixie Pre-school from September 2025. We take children from 2 years and 9 months, spaces do fill up quickly so if you are interested in a space please contact the school office to arrange a look around and complete the necessary forms.

The children are busy preparing for their Christmas plays at the moment and we are all looking forward to the very popular PTFA Christmas Fair on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 3.45 – 5.30pm. There will be a variety of craft stalls and games for the children, please come down and support them if you are able.

AZ Autos have kindly sponsored our Santa Fun run by purchasing medals for the children that take part. The children are going to be doing a sponsored run around the field or the hall, weather dependant to raise money for the PTFA.

We will once again be collecting for The Need Project this Christmas. We will be encouraging the children to donate a festive food favourite for the charity, if anyone local to Shillington would also like to contribute we will arrange for the food parcels to be collected from school on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024. They have specifically asked for tins of Ham, tins of Salmon, Christmas Puddings, Teabags and Family sized boxes of biscuits.

On behalf of everyone at Shillington Lower School, we wish the local community a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**(CHRISTMAS EVE - WHEN MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT THE ANIMALS SPOKE AT THE MOMENT OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.)**



It is near the hour of midnight, on the twenty fourth day of the twelfth month of the year, in the year of 1522. The sky is sparkling with stars. The frosted grass reflects their light, shooting rainbow prisms. In the thatched byre the animals stand; the bull, the two cows, the few sheep in their wooden pen, the five hens in their coop. In the dark, the air is warm with their breath, it smells of hay.

The hour turns; the bull shifts its weight against its wooden stall. It opens its mouth and speaks, 'The hour is now'. Its voice is deep, and low. The cows lift their heads; they speak, 'He is come', they say, mildly. The sheep huddle and push. 'He is here', they say. The hens fluck up their feathers and look upwards. 'We see Him, we see Him!' Their voices are sharp and shrill.



Outside, there comes a step, crackling the frosted grass. The wooden latch is lifted, and the farmer comes into the byre. His lantern only dimly lights the beasts. The bull shifts its weight again and leans against its stall. The cows' eyes gleam in the dull light as they turn their heads to look at the farmer. The sheep rehuddle, and the hens have tucked their heads under their wings. Their eyes are closed. The farmer stands for a few heartbeats. He hears the sounds of beasts eating and hooves scraping. He is disappointed yet again, and leaves, latching the byre door. Still he waits outside. Silence. The stars fill the bowl of the sky and reflect on the icicles hanging from the thatched roof. He goes back, feet crunching, across the grass to his home.



It is near the hour of midnight, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, in the year 2024. The sky is overcast, and the air is muggy. In vast metal sheds stand stalled cows in their hundreds, chewing their cud. In huge buildings like warehouses, hens are milling, aimlessly. Sheep lie, near to lambing, in football sized sheds.

Technology monitors all these lives, 24/7, checking air temperature, noise levels, food provision, humidity. The overhead fluorescent light strips are dimmed for the night, but are never off. As the digital clocks move silently from 24 to 0.00, the monitors all show a sudden, brief, unexplained spike, and return to normal. The faintest sigh ripples through these metal farms and is gone. The drizzling rain stops. And one star shines, very far away.





# CHRISTMAS TIME

**Donna's Garden Designs - ☎ 07833-670934**



Christmas is upon us and it is a busy time of year. Trying to get everything ready for the big day. The pressure to make everything perfect, but sometimes some of the most effective decorations are the natural ones foraged from the garden.

A few twigs and some pine branches and cones and a sprig of holly tied at the top makes a festive door hanging or make a wreath with natural materials from the garden. Using Hydrangea heads, seed

heads and some greenery. Also once the festivities are over they can be put on the compost heap completely environmentally friendly and used again as compost!

Foraging and making these decorations is a lovely activity to do – it's free and away from the bustling shops! You can get some lovely crisp sunny days in December so get out and get some fresh air and get creative!

Another idea is to make a winter arrangement by cutting shoots from winter flowering shrubs and berries. Put them in a vase with some twigs and in the warmth of the house they will open and bring the outdoors in. When there is not much in the garden you can appreciate this all the more.

A few pots with winter bedding can be put by the front door to welcome guests and brighten the dark days of winter up. Some Cyclamen, Pansies and trailing Ivy. Simple but effective.

Try planting *Sarcococca confusa* also known as Christmas Box by the front or back door. The scent at this time of year is heavenly. It produces white, unassuming flowers but with a strong fragrance. Another favourite for fragrance in the garden is Witch Hazel.

When you have done all that don't forget to have a mulled wine and mince pie. Get cosy and plan your garden for next year. I love looking through the seed catalogues seeing what's new for the garden and looking forward to another year in the garden and all the magic it brings not only at Christmas but throughout the year !

Enjoy your garden! Happy Christmas!

*Donna x*



## JOBS IN THE GARDEN FOR DECEMBER



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✂ Insulate garden taps</li><li>✂ Feed birds and make sure they have water</li><li>✂ Plant trees</li><li>✂ Repair lawns</li><li>✂ Protect vulnerable plants and pots from frost damage</li><li>✂ Prune deciduous trees and shrubs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✂ If it snows shake off plants and shrubs to prevent damage</li><li>✂ Plan out your garden and order seeds for next year</li><li>✂ Ask for garden vouchers for Xmas to spend throughout the year! My mum loves them!</li></ul> |
|--|--|

# PLANNING APPLICATIONS

## DECISIONS FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (CBC):

Appeal reference: **APP/P0240/W/24/3340238.**

**Application reference: CB/23/03275/FULL – 126-128 Bury Road.**

Erection of a detached two storey sustainable dwelling together with a new vehicular access, parking and turning area, and associated private garden, landscaping and boundary treatment.

***ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS - 04/09/2024***

Appeal Reference: **APP/P0240/W/24/3341349.**

**Application Reference: CB/23/02764/FULL – 17 Upton End Road.**

Erection of a new detached dwelling and demolition of existing detached garage and erection of replacement garage.

***SPLIT DECISION - Application for new dwelling DISMISSED  
Construction of new garage ALLOWED, 23/09/2024***

**CB/TCA/24/00322 – 71 Church Street.**

Works to trees in a Conservation Area: reduce overall crown by 4m to Sycamore Tree T1, T3 and sectionally fell Sycamore Tree T2.

***RAISE NO OBJECTIONS 09/09/2024.***

**CB/24/02180/FULL – 129 Bury Road.**

Single storey rear extension.

***GRANTED 25/09/2024.***

**CB/TRE/24/00480 – 1 New Walk.**

Works to a tree (s) protected by a Tree Preservation Order: MB/76/00009/T4

Pear tree to the front of the property to be reduced by approx. 30%.

***GRANTED 06/11/2024***

**CB/24/02294/FULL – Barn at Chalkley Bush Farm, Hanscombe End Road.**

Conversion of hay barn to self-build dwelling and erection of new car barn and cycle store. (Parish council did not support)

***APPLICATION WITHDRAWN 15/11 2024***

## DISCUSSED BY PC AND AWAITING A DECISION BY CBC:

**CB/TCA/24/00518 – 10 Hanscombe End Road**

Works to a tree within a Conservation Area: Remove ash tree to ground level.

***SUPPORT***

## AWAITING DISCUSSION AT DECEMBER PC MEETING:

**CB/24/03197/FULL- 102 High Road.**

Construction of two storey rear extension

If you are in control of a dog, you must (by law) pick up dog mess on any land with public access including:

- town centres / roads / pavements / public footpaths
- woodlands / agricultural land / common land

Use an appropriate bin or take the dog's poo home. Even if you bag it, you will still be committing a littering offence if you do not deal with it responsibly.

## **Dogs on leads**

If you're walking a dog, you must keep it on a lead (it's an offence not to). This should be no longer than 2 metres, on land covered by a dog order. This includes:

- cemeteries
- marked sports pitches
- A and B roads
- adjoining footpaths
- verges

It also applies to some car parks, picnic sites and sensitive wildlife areas at countryside sites.

## **Areas excluding dogs**

It is an offence to allow your dog to enter an exclusion area. Exclusion areas include all enclosed children's play areas and closed multi-use games areas. This also restricts dogs from designated education areas.

## **Fines**

The fine for committing an offence contained in a dog control order is a maximum of £1,000.

A fixed penalty notice of £100 may be offered in place of prosecution.

Full legal orders are available on request.

## **Reporting a breach of a dog control order**

You can report someone who has breached an order to us: ☎: **0300-300-8302**  
**Email: [customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)**. You should make a note of what you saw, with as much detail as you can, including (if known) the name, address or car registration number of the person in charge of the dog or a description, what happened, plus details of the date, time, and place. We may ask you to provide a witness statement. We'll investigate and may take action, which could include issuing a fixed penalty notice or prosecution for the dog's owner.

## **Public space protection orders**

These points are covered by our public space protection orders. These are designed to:

- cut down dog fouling
- restrict dogs from places such as children's playgrounds
- ensure that dogs are kept on leads in sensitive areas

# VILLAGE FACILITIES



## SHILLINGTON VILLAGE HALL

All enquiries please contact:  
the **BOOKING CLERK** on ☎ **07376-682935**  
e-mail: [shillingtonvillagehall@yahoo.com](mailto:shillingtonvillagehall@yahoo.com)

*Large Hall - Stage - Small Meeting Room - Kitchen & Bar Facilities - Disabled Access & Toilet.  
Fund raising Clothing Collection Bank in Car Park.*

\* **Children's Parties** \* **Discos/Dances** \* **Meetings** \* **Toddler Groups** \*  
\* **Indoor Bowls** \* **Exhibitions** \* **Circuit Training** \* **Karate** \*

The Car Park (when not in use by hall bookers) can be hired for events where village parking is limited.

*The Village Hall Committee would politely request residents making use of the Car Park for overnight parking to please note (see booking sheet on Notice Board) that Hall Hirers take priority for parking for their bookings, if you could ensure you are not occupying the car park during these times.*

*Thank you ☺*

## SHILLINGTON SOCIAL CLUB

*Greenfields, Shillington* ☎ **07826-518667 (Gavin)**



- ☺ Meat Raffle every Saturday with proceeds to the Pavilion Refurbishment
- ☺ Local free range Eggs for sale
- ☺ Local Honey for sale



*Any donations of Christmas Draw Prizes gratefully received for The Social Club Christmas Draw in aid of Motor Neurone Disease.*



*Draw will be made on **Sunday 22nd December 2024 at 6:30pm***

### CURRENT OPENING TIMES:

- \* Mondays: 7.30pm-11.00pm \*
- \* Thursdays: 7.30pm-11.00pm \*
- \* Fridays: 7.30pm-11.00pm \*
- \* Saturdays: 12 noon - 8.00pm \* Sundays 12 noon-8.00pm \*

### LICENSING POLICY:

*Children aged 16 and under are welcome with an appropriate adult until 9pm on any day we are open. Social Club Committee*



# USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS



*CBC's trading standards department has provided the following numbers, to assist residents in identifying doorstep cold callers, purporting to be from energy or water companies, and enable checks with these organization if any reason for concern.*

British Gas	General Enquiries	0800 048 0202
EDF Energy	Customer services	0800 096 9000
National Gas	Emergency Service Helpline	0800-111-999
npower	General Enquiries (landline)	0800 073 3000
	General Enquiries (mobile)	0330 100 3000
ScottishPower	General Customer Service (landline)	0800 027 0072
	General Customer Service (mobile)	0345 270 0700
SSE	General Enquiries	0800 980 8831
Anglian Water		0800 145 145
<b>UK Power Networks</b>	<b>To report or get info on power cuts</b> Text <b>POWER</b> and your postcode to 80876 <b>www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk</b>	<b>National number 105</b>

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ. ( <a href="http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> )	
General enquiries .....	0300 300 8000 ( <a href="mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> )
Highways/Emergencies on the roads (fallen trees, etc). 24-hour emergency team .....	0300-300-8049
Dog Fouling/animal welfare .....	0300-300-8302
Flooding .....	0300-300-8049
Planning .....	0300-300-8307
Recycling/Flytipping .....	0300-300-8302
Police (Emergency) .....	999
Bedfordshire Police (non-Emergency) .....	101
Bus Information .....	0870-608-2608 or 01234-228337
Shillington Services (Martin Brogan) for washing machine repairs, etc... ..	07975-944394
High Road Stores/Post Office.....	0345 722 3344
The Crown Inn.....	01462-711667
The Musgrave Arms (Giuseppe).....	07739-864634 / pub 01462-712789
The View (formerly Live & Let Live).....	01582-882555

## Parish Councillors – contact details:

John Hyde 07799-537346	Gavin Jenkins 07826-518667	Liam Keene 07867-993393	Angus McCormick 01462-712096	Richa Mitra via the Clerk
Annie Palmer via the Clerk	Tracey Petrie via the Clerk	Joseph Olding via the Clerk	Mark Thyne 01462-712201	Derek Turner 01462-712462

# VILLAGE CALENDAR

## **DECEMBER**

- 1 Congregational Church Service – Revd. Angus McCormick & Mrs. Hazel Beadle – 10.30am
- 3 Parish Council Meeting – Congregational Church – 7.45pm
- 6 Congregational Church – Xmas Tree Festival – 3.30 to 5.30pm
- 7 Congregational Church – Xmas Tree Festival – 2 to 5pm
- 7 Village Hall Committee – Live Band Fundraiser with FYNNIUS FOGG – 7pm
- 8 Congregational Church Service – Revd. Angus McCormick – 10.30am
- 8 Congregational Church – Xmas Tree Festival – 2 to 5pm
- 8 Congregational Church – Carol Service – 5pm
- 11 Men’s Club – Christmas Party at The View, Pegsdon
- 12 Christmas Jumper Day !
- 12 WI meeting – ‘Sloop Groggy Dogs’ - Congregational Church – 7.30pm
- 13 Lower School – Christmas Fair – 3.45 to 5.30pm
- 14 Social Club – Live Band “Two Mice & One Pair of Glasses” – 9pm
- 15 Congregational Church Service – Mrs. Sandra Hare – 10.30am
- 16 Playing Field Management Committee – Social Club – 8pm
- 22 Congregational Church Service – Mrs. Janet Worley (favourite Carols & Xmas Music) - 10.30am
- 22 Social Club – Christmas Draw in aid of MND – 6.30pm
- 29 Congregational Church – United Churches Service with Gravenhurst Methodist, Shillington & Stondon Baptist – Chaplain from Chicksands will be preaching – 10.30am
- 31 Social Club – New Year’s Eve with Becky B (Kylie) – adults only

## **JANUARY 2025**

- 5 Congregational Church Service –Mrs. Hazel Beadle – 10.30am
- 6 Shillingfest 25 – Working Group Meeting – Social Club – 7.30pm
- 7 Parish Council Meeting – Congregational Church – 7.45pm
- 8 Men’s Club – Evening Meal at The Raven, Hexton
- 9 WI Meeting – Quiz Night – Congregational Church – 7.30pm
- 12 Congregational Church Service – Mr. Richard Crane – 10.30am
- 19 Congregational Church Service – Revd. Angus McCormick – 10.30am
- 22 Village Hall Management Committee Meeting – Jubilee Room – 7.30pm
- 26 Congregational Church Service – Mrs. Hazel Beadle – 10.30am

## **FEBRUARY**

- 2 Congregational Church Service – Mrs. Hazel Beadle – 10.30am
- 3 Playing Field Management Committee – Social Club – 8pm
- 4 Parish Council Meeting – Congregational Church – 7.45pm
- 5 Men’s Club – “Kick Off” Party at the Congregational Church
- 12 Men’s Club – Evening meal at The Crown, Henlow
- 22 Friends of All Saints – 1980s Vinyl Disco – Village Hall – 7.30pm

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