

# Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Newsletter



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As the photo above shows, harvest is in full swing and will probably be over by the time this newsletter hits doormats. It's an important (and brief) time of year and one is woven into the very fabric of our village life. Worth remembering if you're stuck behind a combine harvester on a narrow lane!

Happily, for the first time in over a year, we have news of some actual, in person events over the next few months. Fingers

crossed they don't all have to be relegated to Zoom.

The start of September sees the Hort Soc Annual Show and the Dalmatian Welfare Fun Day, followed later in the month by the Harvest Service at St John's and the return of the (hopefully) monthly village pub night.

October brings the return of the Hort Soc autumn social and the second weekend of December will be a blaze of festivity with the kids' and seniors' Christmas parties, organised by BAACA.

As ever if you'd like to help with the Christmas events please get in touch and we can pass your details to the organisers.

And finally, if you've ever thought you could do a better newsletter...now is your chance. The current editor has been in post for five years and would be delighted to hand over the reins. Help also sought with the website and associated social media. Some experience would be an asset.

[newsletter@bellingdon.com](mailto:newsletter@bellingdon.com)

## SEPTEMBER

**4th:** Hort Soc Annual Show  
**5th:** Dalmatian Welfare Funday  
**17th:** Community Pub  
**26th:** Harvest Service

## OCTOBER

**15th:** Hort Soc Social  
**tbc:** Community Pub (and November tbc)

## DECEMBER

**11th:** Kids' Christmas Party  
**12th:** Seniors' Christmas Party  
**tbc:** Community Pub

## Community Association

The AGM of the Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Association (BAACA) was held, via zoom, on Tuesday 13th July.

From the Chair's report:

"The pandemic and associated restrictions have had an impact on the hall's income. During the brief periods that it was able to open, it gained some income; understandably not every club/group wanted to return immediately, especially as the rules were regularly changing and not always very clear.

Regrettably major events such as Forro Fest, Hort Soc's annual show and the Fete were cancelled, with all social activities curtailed in line with government guidelines; this also included the children's Christmas party and the senior Christmas lunch; both will be resurrected in December 2021.

Some outside activities continued - both the junior and adult football managed to have a stop/start season along with archery.

Since the restrictions have begun to ease, some of the clubs have returned to using the hall - it was good to see some of their representatives at the AGM.

The Chair thanked the booking secretary (Jo Richardson) for her fantastic work managing bookings during this difficult period, providing support and advice to the hirers.

Fortunately, the Association was eligible for government community support grants which have boosted funds, enabling planning for future maintenance and improvements to the hall and recreation grounds, including roof repairs, and car park resurfacing. These will ensure that the hall is in good working order for the community for the foreseeable future".

Anyone who would like to get involved in the running of this important community asset please do get in touch - [contact@bellingdon.com](mailto:contact@bellingdon.com) or speak to one of the trustees. You can find out more about BAACA, plus find all the documents from then AGM at:

[www.bellingdon.com/community-association](http://www.bellingdon.com/community-association)

## Horticultural Society



**You may remember that the Bellingdon & Asheridge Horticultural Society faced a stark choice in recent years because of declining membership - fold completely or merge with another local group.**

In 2019 we took the decision to merge with Chesham Horticultural Society as both were lacking sufficient members to run successfully. The name of the new organisation is "**Chesham Vale Gardeners' Society**".

If you would like to get in touch, the new email address is [cheshamvalegs@gmail.com](mailto:cheshamvalegs@gmail.com), or you can find the society on twitter [@cheshamvalegs](https://twitter.com/cheshamvalegs) and on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cheshamvalegs) by searching for "Chesham Vale Gardeners Society".

### Upcoming events

**Autumn Show** - 4th Sept 2021, Village Hall, staging from 9.30am to 11am, open to the public from 2.30pm. Contact Nicola Parkes 07973 558675 OR Adrian Norris 07718 609 719 for a show schedule. Membership fee payable to enter exhibits.

**Peace in the Park** - 18th September, Lowndes Park. We will have a stand at this free event run by Chesham Rotary Club for the whole community. Come and see us for gardening activities, advice and chat.

**October Social** - 15th October, Village Hall, 7pm till late. 70's theme, fancy dress optional. Tickets £7.50 for a three course meal & quizzes. Bring your own drinks. Contact as above for tickets.

<https://www.bellingdon.com/chesham-vale-gardeners-society/>

## St John's Church

We continue to meet each week at St John's Church for our 10am service, maintaining Covid safety measures.



We now sing the hymns instead of listening to recorded versions, although recorded music is now part of some of our services.

Our Harvest service is on 26th September at the usual time. You are most welcome to join us for any of our services - numbers and social distancing permitting.

If you would like to do so do get in touch with Tim Yates at [tim.yates3@btinternet.com](mailto:tim.yates3@btinternet.com).

<https://www.bellingdon.com/st-johns-church-bellingdon/>

## Ever wanted to play Short Mat Bowls?

**Come and join us – Bellingdon Short Mat Bowls Club has some vacancies for the game, we play all year round.**

Short Mat is an interesting game for players of all ages and any ability, played indoors on a mat 6ft wide by 45ft long. We play on Monday evenings (7.30pm) and Wednesday mornings (10.00 am) in the village hall. We also play in leagues against various local clubs.

Come and exercise in a safe environment and give it a try. Just turn up or phone, no equipment needed (just wear socks).

Contact Brian Latham on 07971 595083.

*Don Baker*

## USEFUL CONTACTS/INFO

**Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Assoc**

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

[www.facebook.com/bavhall](https://www.facebook.com/bavhall)

[www.twitter.com/bellandash](https://www.twitter.com/bellandash)

[contact@bellingdon.com](mailto:contact@bellingdon.com)

**Local Police Community Support Officer**

[CheshamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CheshamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

**The New Grapevine:**

<https://cholesbury.com/the-grapevine/>

## Ultrafast Broadband Update

We are delighted to announce that the BAACA has now signed a contract with BT Openreach for the provision of improved broadband speeds – up to 1gbps (gigabit per second) for the remainder of Bellingdon & some parts of Asheridge currently not provisioned! *[Not to be confused with those covered by the Cholesbury project...Ed.]*

Thanks to all those households who signed up for vouchers from DCMS (topped up by Bucks County). To get to this stage has been a major effort and the committee would like to thank Tony Orr in particular for his work with Openreach to get us to this point.

The next couple of months should see Openreach ordering equipment, finalising implementation plans etc. then the project will be moved to deployment.

How long this will take is difficult to know, although Openreach aim to have the work complete within a year, but at some stage the service will be made available for sale through the Internet retailers.

At this point householders can upgrade their service from their existing provider or use a new one. We will send a note out once this point is reached. We fully expect many more home will request the service once it is up and running. We look forward to faster speeds for our internet access in the future.

*Hugh Griffiths*

## Local Business Focus

### H G Matthews: the Bellingdon Brickworks

**It's a fair bet that many local residents, if they hadn't done so previously, would have taken the opportunity demanded by lockdowns to explore the many paths which criss-cross the area and in so doing will have noticed, and maybe even remarked upon, the many deep dells suddenly and often unexpectedly encountered in the woods.**

These are the legacy of an occupation that has been a very local activity for almost two centuries.

Our area of the Chilterns is renowned for its unusually coloured clay which lends itself to making attractive bricks of an excellent quality. Unfortunately this clay appears in very local pockets and in early years had to be dug by hand and transported the shortest distance to the nearest of the many local brickworks of which there now remains only one such still in operation – H.G. Matthews, here in Bellingdon.

The development of machinery capable of extracting clay from pockets otherwise difficult to extract from has meant that the brickworks can continue to source clay locally and with modern machinery can restore the land leaving little sign of abstraction, giving Bellingdon bricks considerably less environmental impact than those mass-produced elsewhere.

Founded by the present managing director's grandfather in 1923, firing his kilns by coal, it's doubtful that Henry Matthews would have foreseen the changes which have resulted in timber sourced locally becoming a major source of fuel.

While investing in some of the latest technology in order to remain efficient, H.G. Matthews have vehemently maintained the essence of what makes their product unique, keeping the hand-making skills alive as well as firing in traditional updraft Scotch



Historically clay extraction left deep “dells”

kilns which are fundamentally unchanged since Roman times.

In medieval times, with kiln-fired bricks commanding a high price, bricks were also made from a mixture of clay and straw, dried in the open, resulting in a brick with little structural strength.

However in his determination for both his brickworks and his products to achieve maximum sustainability, Henry's grandson Jim has revisited this ancient combination, resulting in the development of “Strocks” which are load-bearing bricks made from clay and straw but now made using methods developed at Bellingdon resulting in a product that now meets building regulations for structural use.

Similarly, Jim's team have developed Hempcrete blocks, a mixture of hemp and lime, both of which are sourced locally, providing an excellent non-structural and easy-to-lay product with a high insulation value.

Besides the brickworks, Matthews offers a fireplace supply and fitting service along with a wide range of fires and stoves all displayed in the showroom on site.

<https://www.hgmatthews.com/>

*[If there's a local business you'd like us to feature, please let us know, contact details below - Ed]*

Details of clubs, events and village news, including hall bookings: [www.bellingdon.com](http://www.bellingdon.com)  
Please send comments, questions and ideas for future articles to the editor at [newsletter@bellingdon.com](mailto:newsletter@bellingdon.com)

The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity or length.