

HOUGHTON CONQUEST Village Newsletter

April 2025



Spring has Sprung

Your Newsletter, for Your Village

HOUGHTON CONQUEST PARISH COUNCIL

Members

PCllr Saqhib Ali

PCllr Jean Ashcroft

PCllr Peter Bullock

PCllr Sian Davies

PCllr Liz Lovell (Chair)

PCllr Alan Ross

PCllr Sarah Sharpe (Vice Chair)

PCllr Clinton Taylor

PCllr Bryn Whittaker

Committees, Working Parties and Representatives

Police Liaison/Community Safety	PCllr Ashcroft
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Highways	PCllr Ross
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Planning Sub-Committee	PCllrs Bullock, Whittaker & TBA
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Village Hall	PCllr Ashcroft
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Play Area	TBA
Sports Field	PCllr Lovell
Allotments/Orchard/SIDs	PCllr Lovell
Tree Warden	PCllr Lovell
Newsletter/Community Facebook	PCllrs Bullock, Sharpe, Davies and Lucy Spencer
Website	Parish Clerk
United Charities	PCllr Bullock
Noticeboards/Litter Picking	George Maxsted
Defibrillator	PCllr Lovell and Parish Clerk
School Liason	PCllr Sharpe
East/West Rail and Wixams Station	PCllr Taylor
Universal	PCllr Taylor
Wixams and GP Surgery	PCllrs Ali, Taylor and Sharpe

Parish Council Clerk:

Jo Graves T: 07563 527415

E: clerk@houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk

The Parish Council usually meets on the second Thursday of the month except August & December, in the Village Hall committee room at 7.30pm. Parishioners are invited to attend the meetings, and time is allocated for them to address the council. If you have

any matter you wish to draw to the attention of the Parish Council, you can contact any Councillor, the Parish Clerk, or attend a meeting. If you wish to attend a meeting, please notify the clerk or the chairman before the meeting, so that you can speak during the time allotted.

Central Bedfordshire Councillor:

Bec Hares T: 0300 300 8505

E: rebecca.hares@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Parish Council website

You can register for email news updates from Houghton Conquest Parish Council by going to houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk & click on the "subscribe" button on the home page. We promise we won't inundate you. We only post news items that we believe are important to Houghton Conquest residents. **Subscription is completely free of charge.**

Please note that the closing date for insertion of copy into the June 2025 issue of The Houghton Conquest Village Newsletter is 21st May 2025

You may send copy by email to the editor on hcvillagenews@gmail.com or via the Parish Clerk
All contributions are welcome but are subject to the editor's discretion as to size and content

Parish Council Updates

Chair's Report



I would like to thank Peter Bullock for his service to our community which commenced in September 2018, six and a half years ago during which time he has served as both the Chair and Vice Chair. His experience, knowledge, support and commitment will be sorely missed. He has also been the Editor of the Parish Newsletter which he is in the process of handing over to his successor. The result of this is that shortly we will be three Councillors short so if anyone here would like to join us, please feel free to speak to Jo or email her.

We have been successful in recruiting representatives from the newer parts of the village and currently have four members from V4 and the main part of the Wixams development. We feel that this has given us a better prospective on the issues facing the residents of the more recent part of our Parish.

These issues are caused by a variety of factors but one of most pressing is the lack of infrastructure. The Wixams part of our

Parish has no medical provision – so no doctor or dentist. There are also no shops apart from one in the Wixams. This means that living in the area without a car would be virtually impossible. So much for CBC green credentials!

Another issue is the lack of facilities for the young people of the area. Various promises, plans and applications have been made over the years but has been little movement in this area. It is hoped that following the recent public consultation a solid acceptable proposal will be forthcoming. Particular thanks is offered to Councillor Sarah Sharpe for the excellent Youth Engagement Event which she co-ordinated in January this year. This event was attended by between 150-200 young people who were encouraged to give their opinions regarding future provision in the Wixams area.

In the older part of the Parish, the sports field is now in regular use for youth football under the guidance of Ben Henry from Wixams Wanderers.

The play park at Daysfield continues to be well used and we are considering reinstating the football goal. The area continues to be regularly inspected and running repairs are carried out. Of course, if you are aware of any issues please report them to Jo.

The skatepark continues to be an issue with repairs due to vandalism continuing to be a problem however, we have a meeting booked with a skatepark contractor who will be advising on the actions we can take to bring the site up to standard and give the whole area a new lease of life. All input from end users would be gratefully received.

The allotments are as you can imagine very wet at the moment although work is being carried out to prepare plots for the coming

growing season. We have one spare plot at the moment. If you would like to take one on, please let Jo know.

That's about it really. I would like to offer grateful thanks to all volunteers who have served on the Council this year and particular thanks go to Jo for her patience and understanding and for keeping the Council on the straight and narrow.

Warm regards

Liz

PCllr Liz Lovell

*The Chair's report is intended to provide a general update.
Agendas and approved minutes can be viewed on the Parish
Council website www.houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk*

CENTRAL BEDS INDEPENDENT COUNCILLOR – Rebecca Hares



Please contact me at bex.hares@gmail.com or on 0300 300 8505 if you have any issues that I may be able to help with.

UCIlr Bec Hares



POLICE & HIGHWAYS MATTERS

For anyone wishing to report any crime that does not merit a 999 emergency call, please either ring 101 or report a crime on-line by visiting www.bedfordshire.police.uk, where you will be offered a variety of options for reporting.

CRIMESTOPPERS

If you notice anything strange, anything that doesn't look quite right, the Police ask that you ring with your suspicions. Please ring: **CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111**. It is quick to do this, and you can be anonymous.

Houghton Conquest Crime Figures February 2025

Offence	Number	Date	Place
Other Criminal Damage	2	16/02/25 19/02/25	Four Acre Drive London Lane
Theft or Unauthorised Taking of a Motor Vehicle	1	22/02/25	Four Acre Drive
Malicious Communications	1	22/02/25	Undisclosed
Trafficking of Drugs	1	26/02/25	Barleycorn Close
Assault without Injury	1	21/02/25	Sheepcote Edge
Other Theft	1	01/02/25	Banks Croft
Grand Total	7		

Houghton Conquest Crime Figures January 2025

Offence	Number	Date	Place
Other Criminal Damage	2	16/02/25 19/02/25	Four Acre Drive London Lane
Theft or Unauthorised Taking of a Motor Vehicle	1	22/02/25	Four Acre Drive
Malicious Communications	1	22/02/25	Undisclosed
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Other Theft	1	01/02/25	Banks Croft
Grand Total	7		

Previous months

January 24	8
February 24	17
March 24	7
April 24	4
May 24	8
June 24	16
July 24	20
August 24	15
September 24	15
October 24	16
November 24	17
December 24	11
January 2025	13

SIDs

Data from SIDs (Bracketed figures from previous report)

13/02/25 – 12/03/25

0046 (The Grove) 20mph zone

Arriving – from The Grove towards the High Street

Violations	51.74%	(48.96%) UP
Of which	72.76%	(74.27%) = 21-25 mph DOWN
	27.23%	(25.72%) = 26+
Average speed	21mph	(21mph)
V85	25mph	(25mph)
Average Vehicles per day	274	(283)
Total in period	7444	(10329)
Highest recorded	53mph	(43)

Tuesday 25th February 23:00 – 00:00

Departing – from The High Street towards The Grove

Violations	62.84%	(62.97%) DOWN
Of which	69.30%	(70.58%) = 21-25 mph
	30.69%	(29.41%) = 26+
Average speed	22mph	(22mph)
V85	26mph	(26mph)

Average Vehicles per day	253	(262)
Total in period	6885	(9140)
Highest recorded	59mph	(52)

Monday 10th March 11:00 – 12:00

13/02/25 – 13/03/25

0156 (Bedford Road) 30mph zone

Victoria Drive and Mill Lane

Arriving from The Oak

Violations	6.19 %	(5.46%) Up
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Of which	84.27%	(84.70%) =31-35
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	15.72%	(15.29%) =35+
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Average speed	24mph	(24mph)
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V85	28mph	(28mph)
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Average vehicles per day	834	(810)
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Total in period	22658	(28307)
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Highest recorded	62mph	(64mph)
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Thursday 27th February 17:00 – 18:00

Departing to the Oak

Violations	10.69%	(9.65%) UP	
Of which	85.10%	(85.45%)	=31-35
	14.89%	(14.54%)	=35+
Average speed	25mph	(25mph)	
V85	30 mph	(29mph)	
Average vehicles per day	936	(912)	
Total in period	25415	(31877)	
Highest recorded	58mph	(64 mph)	

Thursday 27th February 18:00 – 19:00

13/02/25 – 12/03/25

0047 (Meadow Road) 30mph zone

Arriving – From A530 towards Pitchfork Way

Violations	5.74%	(4.04%) UP	
Of which	83.81%	(85.42%)	= 31-35 mph
	16.18%	(14.57%)	= 36+
Average speed	22mph	(22 mph)	
V85	27mph	(27mph)	
Average Vehicles per day	501	(581)	
Total in period	13623	(20316)	

Highest recorded **61mph (68)**

Thursday 14th February 23:00 – 00:00

Departing – Pitchfork Way towards A530

Violations **7.91% (5.08%) UP**

Of which **83.59% (83.79%) = 31-35 mph**

16.40% (16.20%) = 36+

Average speed **22mph (22mph)**

V85 **28mph (27mph)**

Average Vehicles per day **290 (343)**

Total in period **7866 (12170)**

Highest recorded **58mph(58)**

Wednesday 19th February 13:00 – 14:00

POTHOLES

Whilst we continually report the multitude of potholes in and around the village via the CBC FixMyStreet app, it is always helpful for others to post these too, as multiple postings will draw more attention to them and potentially get them fixed more quickly.

You can access this by either going to:

<https://fixmystreet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk> or by downloading the **FixMyStreet** app on your phone available from Apple's App Store and Google Play

All Saints Church



ELSTOW TEAM
MINISTRY



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



ALL SAINTS
HOUGHTON CONQUEST

All Saints Houghton and All Saints, Wilstead are now part of a team ministry of 5 churches with Elstow Abbey, St Michael & All Angels, Bedford and St Mary's, Cardington.

Any contact for the 5 churches re. services, Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals etc. should be made to Fr. Paul Messam on our central office number, below (with answer phone) or email.

Team Rector:

Rev'd Fr Paul Messam SCP, Tel: (01234) 261477, email: vicar@elstow-abbey.org.uk

Team Vicar:

Rev'd Mike Stuart. email: vicar2@elstow-abbey.org.uk

Team Curate:

Rev'd Steve Marsh. email: curate@elstow-abbey.org.uk

Team Ministry Website: www.elstowteamministry.org.uk

Services for April are as follows:

6th April	9.30am Morning Praise – Robert Heley
13th April	9.30am Holy Communion; Fr Steve Marsh (Palm Sunday)
14th April	6.30pm Holy Communion; Fr Steve Marsh (Holy Week)
18th April	11.00am Service with soup lunch in Village Hall – Fr Steve Marsh (Good Friday)
20th April	9.30am Holy Communion; Fr Steve Marsh (Easter Day) 3.00pm Family & Children's Service; Fr Steve Marsh
27th April	9.30am Holy Communion; Rev'd Mike Stuart
4th May	10.00am Holy Communion with consecration of Nave Altar; Bishop Richard
11th May	9.30am TBA
18th May	9.30am TBA
25th May	6.00pm Holy Communion at Elstow Abbey (Fr Steve's last service)

- **Do note our new Family Service.** Fr Steve is running this service once a month on Sunday afternoons. (We know early mornings on Sundays are difficult with young children!)
- Fr Paul Messam is on Sabbatical from 28th April – 29th August.
- Fr Steve's last service with us is Sunday 25th May 6.00pm at Elstow.

On 24th June he will be licensed as Vicar of Clophill and Maulden in St Mary's, Maulden. We will miss him and wish him well in his new appointment.

Tom Frost has made us a beautiful Nave Altar so that communion can be held in a more intimate setting and saving the long walk up to the high altar! The Bishop of Bedford is consecrating this at a special service on May 4th at 10.00am (please note the time!)

Church Wardens: Gary Mudd (01234 741871) and Chris Robertson (01234 741964). Let us know of any concerns. We'd love to hear from local Christians who'd like to be involved in taking our church forward with ideas for worship and events.

We always need more volunteers/helpers to run events, sort recycling etc. If you can give some time to help at Teas, Lunches, Jumble Sales, Concerts etc. Please let **Sarah Hannant** know on **07900 927050** with your details. It would be good to increase data base of those we can call on. (Your data will not be passed on or used for any other purpose.) Sarah now has a WhatsApp group set up for this (**HC Church Volunteers & Bakers**) if you can participate there!

Fundraising & Events:

Looking at Fundraising: We now have postcards in church which have a QR/ telephone link for the Church Giving scheme. This is also posted on the church Facebook group. This gives your donation (one off or regular) back to the church and can be Gift-Aided, increasing its value by 25%. If you would like to support the work of the church/upkeep of this 'at risk', Grade 1 listed building do let me know and I can pop one through your door. This doesn't mean that you have to attend church services, though we'd love to see you there.

Electoral Roll: We have to redo the church electoral roll this year. If you wish to be on the roll, please contact Helen Mudd for a form. This needs to be in by **April 5th**. The roll is basically a list of church members and gives you the right to vote at meetings. It shows the diocese that we are worth supporting!
You can be on the roll if you live in the parish or if you regularly attend services (say once a month)

Do join us for our Easter events and services, particularly our Good Friday lunch

Please check posters and Facebook page for further information and events.

100 Club

January: Margaret Litherth, Zoe Birch, Dulcie Perry

February: Mary Mann, Christine Dean, June Argent

March: Malcolm Smith, Brenda Hartley, Ann Huckle

In January we revise the list of members of the Hundred Club so, if you would like to join, please contact Carol Juffs (01234 381393) or Jackie Davis (01234 740635)

Best Wishes, Gary Mudd

HOUGHTON CONQUEST CHARITIES

Small grants are available to Village Organisations as well as individuals for educational purposes, and the good news is that there is no age limit, but applicants must be resident in the parish.

It is not possible to list all the areas where a grant might be given, but if funds cannot be realised anywhere else, you might well be able to obtain some help towards expenses from this organisation.

Of late we have assisted people with university books, computer and riding equipment required for study, some college expenses, and coaching fees.

If you need help and think we might be able to assist please complete the application form which is on the **Parish Council Website via this link: Houghton Conquest Charities – Houghton Conquest Parish Council (houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk)** and return the completed forms via email to helenmudd@tiscali.co.uk or deliver to **23 Victoria Drive, MK45 3LZ**

Houghton Conquest Charities Incorporating The Clerke & Wilde Educational Foundation Charity No. 307480

Christian Aid Week 2025 11 – 17 May

The main focus of the week this year will be to support indigenous farmers in Guatemala but, as always, if there is a greater need for funds to be deployed for another international crisis, the charity might divert some of the funds raised to help with that.

I have decided to proceed with the traditional house to house collection again this year, but on a slightly scaled down basis in the main matrix of the old village, owing to a reduced number of volunteers. I shall, however, order enough spare “no return call” envelopes to try to cover a little more than that or for people to use at the Church’s plant sale on 17th May if others wish to donate – and there will still be the digital envelope available via a QR code and I hope collectors will also be able to let people pay by card on the doorstep this year...

As a new departure, to boost funds (I hope up to or beyond our usual efforts) the PCC agreed to nominate Christian Aid as our chosen Charity for our Good Friday Lunch on 18th April and we will have a speaker at the informal service to speak about the work the funds enable them to do. For those of you less familiar with this tradition, we hold an informal service in the Village Hall at 11am, attended by a representative of our charity for the day and followed by a soup lunch, which has no fixed price, but we invite generous donations to the charity as you leave. Please do consider attending this – everyone is most welcome.

Helen Mudd

helenmudd@tiscali.co.uk

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The RBL for Houghton Conquest is combined with the Wilstead and Wixams Branch and as such shares its Information and Activities across all 3 areas.

We would like to inform you of the following events

- ***Saturday 10 May:*** Quiz Night at Wixams, Lakeview Village Hall (VE day Celebrations). Please obtain tickets from Paula Trigg at Lakeview Village Hall 07548 386450 or paula1trigg@icloud.com
- ***Saturday 16th August:*** Race Night at Wilstead Bowls Club (VJ day Celebrations)

Village Clubs, Organisations & Events

HOUGHTON CONQUEST VILLAGE HALL'S



FRIENDS OF HOUGHTON CONQUEST LOWER SCHOOL'S

FAMILY QUIZ SPECIAL

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL 2025

5.30PM TIL 9.30PM

QUIZ STARTS AT 6.30PM

£10 ENTRY TO QUIZ PER TEAM, TEAMS UP TO 8

(TEAMS MUST INCLUDE ADULTS & KIDS)

ADULT & CHILDREN ROUNDS | PRIZES TO BE WON

MONIES RAISED FROM QUIZ & ENTRY WILL GO TO THE FRIENDS OF

HOUGHTON CONQUEST LOWER SCHOOLS NEW LIBRARY FUND

High Street, Houghton Conquest, Beds, MK45 3LH

A PIZZA THIS WILL SERVING FRESH WOODFIRED PIZZA!

Quizzing is OPTIONAL. You can still attend to enjoy the company!



The Friends of Houghton Conquest Lower School
are hosting an

ADULTS ONLY NIGHT

It's about time we did something for the adults!!

Novelty and cash prizes to be won!

Saturday 3rd May 2025

Houghton Conquest Village Hall

7PM, last entry 7.30PM

ALL WELCOME

The 3 B's; Bar | Basket Meals | Bingo

£15 a ticket, includes 10 games!

WIN UP TO £100

Tickets to be purchased on the night!

Basket Meals £5 | Raffle Tickets £1 a strip

CASH PREFERRED | Call/Text 07553 928122 for questions

Friends of Houghton Conquest Lower School's

Fathers Day Event

ALL WELCOME TO ENTER

Sat 21st June 2025 | Houghton Conquest Village Hall



£10 entry fee + bring a raffle prize

All monies raised goes to the charity!

Sat 21st June 2025 | Sign In at 12PM

Starts at 1PM | All welcome | Bar | Kids Games Room

Book your place at www.pta-events.co.uk/fohcls

CASH PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD AVAILABLE

IT'S BACK!
SUMMER
SOCIAL
& CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH
Saturday 12th July 2025

 **BAR | BBQ | SILENT DISCO** 
Football Kicks Off @ 1PM

On Houghton Conquest Playing Field (behind the Village Hall)

Bring your own supporters, chairs, picnic blankets etc.

Followed by BBQ, Party & **Silent Disco** from 5PM

At Houghton Conquest Village Hall

£5 entry for adults, £2.50 entry for children

BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE AT

www.pta-events.co.uk/fohcls

Kits Sponsored By



MCFT
Food equipment service

Donate at

JustGiving®

Tickets and footie subs must be paid for online in advance. Tickets are required for ALL adults and ALL children to. Parents are responsible for their children at ALL TIMES. Only alcohol purchases at the bar can be consumed in the hall. Booking will close at 8PM on Fri 11th July 2025.

Are you aged 11-16?

Something exciting is coming
to Houghton Conquest...



Follow us on Facebook @Houghton Conquest's Tribe

Keep an eye out for updates

VILLAGE YOUTH CLUB COMING SOON!



Houghton Conquest Village Hall

Join us for an Afternoon Tea on Sunday 1st June

(12-1pm) or (1.30pm-2.30pm) or (3pm-4pm)

Price per person Adult £20.00. A glass of Prosecco is £5.00 extra. Children £10.00

To book your place please contact:

Email@ hcvillagehall@gmail.com

Karoline: 07969 491 965

Ros: 07704 659 130

*A Deposit is required to secure your place. Please let us know of any special requirements you may have.

Village Hall Regular Events

Contact group contacts for details.

To Book Contact:
Mrs Christine Dean
01234 741182
Cjdean5@aol.com

IF YOU ARE PLANNING A
ONE-OFF EVENT OR
REGULAR MEETING. DON'T
DELAY AND BOOK TODAY.

Weekly

Monday	Indoor Bowls	2pm to 4pm
	Whist	7:45pm
	Qi Kwan Do Martial Arts	6:30pm to 7:30pm
Tuesday	Line Dancers	10am to 12:30pm
Wednesday	Line Dancers	10am to 12:30pm
Thursday	Line Dancers	10am to 12:30pm
Friday (school term only)	Toddlers Group	9:30am to 11:30am

Monthly

1 st Wednesday	Art Society	7:30pm to 9:30pm
1 st Thursday	WI	7:30pm to 10pm
2 nd Tuesday	Garden Club	7:30pm to 9:30pm
2 nd Thursday	Parish Council (Committee Room)	7:30pm
3 rd Wednesday	Art Society	7:30pm to 9:30pm
3 rd Thursday	Village Hall Management Committee	7:30pm

- Run by volunteers for the benefit of the villagers. Hire charges are very reasonable with varying rates for day, evening and weekend, with residents getting preferential rates.
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Licensed bar with air conditioning at £35 hire charge
- Large hall including stage area with curtains
- Small committee room and lounge area
- Large car park

Village Notice Boards

If you would like to put notices in our boards:

1. For the main village and the Robinson Avenue development notice boards, please hand them in to Houghton Conquest village shop.
 - We have 6 noticeboards in these areas, so please provide 6 x A5 copies to ensure a copy goes in each board. Regrettably, we cannot accept larger than A5 due to limited space.
 - If you provide only one copy it will only go in one board. The choice of board will be at the discretion of the Parish Council's representative.
 - If you are advertising an event, please allow plenty of time, as our noticeboards are only updated once a week.
 - We do not accept commercial advertising, unless it is for community activities, such as local classes.
 - Space is limited, so priority will be given to local community events, & is at the discretion of the Parish Council's representative, who kindly keeps all the noticeboards up to date.
2. For Wixams Village 4 noticeboard please email the clerk with notices and mark for attention of Cllr Sharpe

Any queries please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council at clerk@houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk

Houghton Conquest Lower School

Dear Villagers

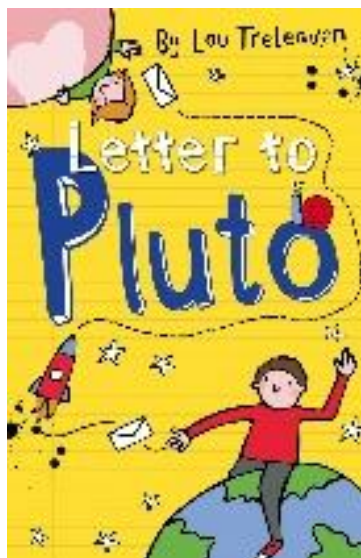
How wonderful, we can literally feel the optimism in the air as we move forward into spring. Our amazingly resilient children are working hard with their learning, the trees are in bud, the daffodils have flowered, and the sun has been shining.



Forest School: This is definitely our favourite place to be, and we are excited to move into the summer term. Our forest school provision is a clear winner with the children and provides a child-centred inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term programme that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. We are so spoilt to have our own provision at the school along with the Greensand Ridge as a backdrop, and of course our very own wonderful Forest School Leader Jo!

Author visit: We were really excited to welcome the author Lou Treleven to our school on World Book Day. The school had an amazing atmosphere as children arrived at school dressed as their favourite book characters and got to enjoy a workshop with Lou

herself. They listened to her stories and created their own characters and planets, with her expert guidance. All children were lucky enough to receive a personalised, signed copy of one of Lou's books to take home at the end of the day.



Science Day: Houghton celebrated Science week on the 7th of March. The theme for this year was 'Change and 'Adapt'. We were welcomed into school with a fantastic show all about bubbles! The children were amazed when they were able to bounce bubbles on their hand, pass bubbles along a line and even stand in giant bubble! The children had a multitude of experiments to conduct in the classroom based on the theme. EYFS created their own animals, looking at the features and characteristics of animals. KS1 focused on magnetic coins, predicting and experimenting which coins are magnetic and how this has changed over the years. KS2 researched how animals have adapted to survive in various conditions before looking at how water in glass bottles can change the sound it produces.

Community: As an integral part of our lovely village the school are keen to become more involved with other village groups and as such, we would be very happy to receive information/invitations/competitions from other groups in the village to see if we can get involved somehow. If you have any information, you can email Mrs Allen at hconquest@hcschool.org.uk.

Finally, if your child is starting school in September 2025, please get in touch with us as we would love to show you round our amazing school. Our school office number is 01234 740202. We look forward to welcoming you soon.

Have a wonderful Easter Holiday.

The team at Houghton Conquest

***Liberty – Hope – Caring – Democracy -
Forgiveness***

Houghton Conquest Garden Club



Nic Wilson, who was the speaker at our February meeting showed us pictures of the almost bare garden of the house they bought in Hitchin seven years ago. Then the transformation after planting many trees, shrubs and flowers, especially for bees and other pollinators. Then the meeting in March was a talk by Kerry Austin about winter interest plants, when she showed us how it's possible to have a lot of colours in the garden even in winter.

On 8th April the talk is on garden design, concept to completion, then on 13th May there is a talk on propagation.

On 8th July we will be having an outing to Burghley House and garden and the cost will be £22 for members and £24 for non-members. All are welcome and if you would like to join us on this trip, please let me know.

Before that we have the spring show on Saturday 5th April, when, hopefully, there will be a good show of Daffodils and other spring flowers. There will be the usual refreshments and a raffle, so why not come along and see what is on show from 2pm. We have our plant sale at the village hall on Saturday 31st May from 10am.

Although we are not always keen to have dandelions in the garden, it's a valuable food for bees and insects at the beginning of the season. Plenty of things can be started in the greenhouse

or on a windowsill now. Such as tomatoes, chillies, aubergines and Dahlias tubers can be potted up ready to be planted out at the end of May.

Margaret Whalley 01234 740892



We have the new programme prepared now and on 3rd April there is the second part of a talk by Evan Willison called tales from the auction room. We heard the first part last year and it was very amusing so this should be a good talk.

Then on 8th May there is a talk by Daria Bilan about Ukrainian embroidery and traditions. Two very different topics, and if you would be interested in either or both why not come along as a visitor.

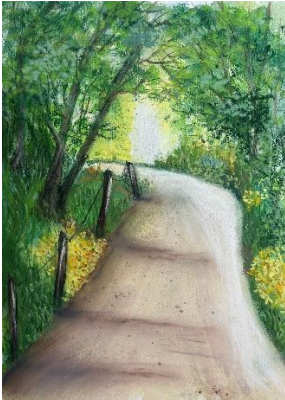
We meet in the village hall at 7.30, but if you would like any more information about these talks or the WI in general, please give me a call.

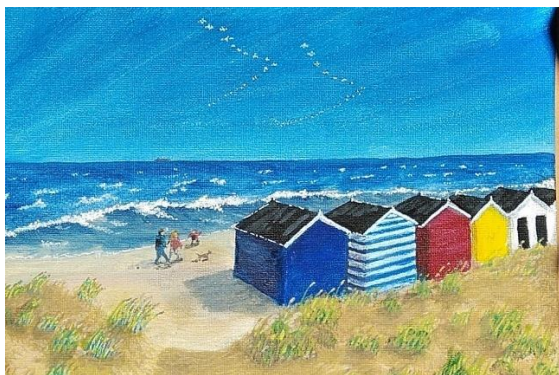
Shirley Johnson 01234 740265

Houghton Conquest Art Society



We have been painting along to a YouTube video recently. Although all painting the same woodland scene, it is interesting how different the finished paintings turned out. The artist we followed online was Paul Clark, he has an excellent series of lessons to follow and is a good tutor. All the materials you need to paint along with Paul are listed, below his videos. Why not give it a try?





Another recent exercise was to paint our own interpretation of the same photo. This was a beach scene with colourful beach huts. We could choose any medium we wished. Some members used watercolour, acrylics or pastels or even collage from scraps of paper or card. Some of us stuck to the exact scene in the photo, some used our 'artists licence' to add boats, people or create a completely abstract picture, which still included beach huts and sand but in a very unusual way. There are some examples above.

We have a local gel printing artist visiting us, Karen Bloodworth produces amazing colourful creations. Gel printing, also known as Gelli plate printing, is a monotype technique using a flexible transparent plate to create unique one-of-a-kind prints, often using

acrylic or water-based inks. From the example pictures I think you can see it's very creative and different to other styles of art.



Our exhibition and sale this year is 11th May in a different venue, it's in the centre of Ampthill, where we are hoping for lots of visitors to showcase our work. All of the beach hut scenes mentioned above will be on display at the venue. The poster above contains the details.

Art Exhibition and Sale

Houghton Conquest Art Society



FREE ENTRY!

Sunday 11th May 2025

10:30AM - 4:00PM

Kings Arms Yard
Amphill



We always welcome new members to our friendly Wednesday evenings in the Village Hall, all information is on the website and our Facebook page.

Happy Spring

Barbara Boxshall

Publicity Manager

houghton-conquest-art-society.co.uk



Wixams Lego Club

Held every Saturday (term time) at Lakeview Village Hall
open only to children who reside or attend a school in Wixams

Session 1 : 9am to 10am : Ages 3 to 7

Session 2 : 10.15am to 11:45am : Ages 7 to 18

Annual Membership £5

Weekly attendance fee - £2 for members, £2.50 for non-members

For further information please email – legoatwixams@gmail.com

Continuing with being Cryptic

Did you enjoy my previous article about cryptic crosswords? Did you immediately search the back pages of your own newspaper to have a go at solving one and did you solve the clues I laid out in the last missive? If so, you're in for a treat!

This is part 2 of my journey into the slightly frustrating world of cryptic puzzles.

Solutions to previous clues

First off, let's deal with the puzzle questions I offered up to you in part 1. I hope you didn't find them hard!

- Belt parts sent back (5)

Answer: STRAP. Explanation: 'sent back' tells us the wordplay in use here – part of the clue will be reversed. It can't be 'belt' because backwards is nonsense (tleb) and that's only 4 letters, not 5...so 'belt' is the definition and 'parts' is thus reversed.

- China lacking a feature (4)

Answer : CHIN. Explanation: my favourite kind of clue, the wordplay indicator is 'lacking' which means missing. Leaves us with 'china' without the 'a' that's also a facial feature.

- Honourable fight of the French and the Spanish (4)

Answer : DUEL. Explanation: Love this one! It's so subtle and clever. An honourable fight might have given the solution away a bit too easily but let's look at the other parts of the clue. There's no indicator phrase or word in this clue, unlike the two above, but if you know some basic French or Spanish you might spot the

components. In French 'of the' is du, and in Spanish 'the' (masculine) is el.

- Position inside Midlands pottery (4)

Answer : SPOT. Explanation – 'inside' is your clue that you are looking for a word than can mean 'position' inside the phrase 'MidlandS POTtery'.

- Croat becomes thespian (5)

Answer : ACTOR. 'becomes' tells us it's an anagram, once you know that, and the only 5 letter word is 'croat' it's very easy!

The Journey Continues (with a little help from an AI-friend)

I have continued to train my brain on cryptic puzzles though I ran into a bit of roadblock when I learnt that some clues are built around homophones, and I have been finding those a little tougher to solve. The theory is easier than the practice – 2 words that sound the same but mean different things. There's lots of indicators to look out for : 'hear', 'on air', 'orally', 'reported' - pretty much anything vaguely related to audio or oral matters .

Reading the clue out loud can be helpful of course but what ties my neural pathways up in knots is when homophones appear inside clues that also rely on another type of wordplay. The reliance of homophone clues on words that are not conversationally used also makes it by multiple factors harder for me to spot the definition in the clue.

"Heard no sound from the stable?" (5)

Solution : NEIGH – based on the old-fashioned use of 'nay' instead of 'no'. Um.... Who says 'nay'?

On the positive side I have found a new ally in my foray into the cryptic world – the sudden omnipresence of GenAI is frustrating for many reasons but it is proving quite fun to test out ChatGPT's efforts at cryptic clue solving whenever I do get totally stuck. I wonder how traditional puzzle competitions will fare in this new AI-powered world? A warning if you do try getting some help from AI : most of the explanations have been great – sometimes they are pure nonsense!

Village Cryptic Clue Competition

It's your turn! Readers of the parish magazine are invited to contribute cryptic clues, either clues you have devised, or else have run into elsewhere, they can be as hard or as easy to solve as you like – the only condition is the clue must in some way be relevant to our village life here in the Parish of Houghton Conquest. If I get enough clues sent in, I will be able to assemble a special Houghton Cryptic puzzle which all the parish councillors will try their wits against, as well as sharing the puzzle in the next edition of this newsletter. You have until Easter Monday to submit your clues to me by email on sian.davies@houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk

Happy clue writing!

Sian Davies



Bowls Club

We meet in the village hall every Monday afternoon from two o'clock until four o'clock with a break for tea and biscuits and a good old natter to catch up on everyone's news. Please come along and give it a try. Your first 'try it session' is free and then we pay £2.00 per week.

As previously advised we would particularly welcome some fit people who are able to assist in setting up and then rolling up the mats at the end of the afternoon. It's not particularly hard work but a good back and bend helps. Yes MATS !!!!! As we now have enough bowlers join us to set up TWO MATS.

Look forward to seeing you. A warm welcome awaits you. If you would like more details please contact our leader,
Monica (01234 743345)

Houghton Conquest Care



I'm sure we are all enjoying the sunshine and the spring flowers – everything looks so much more cheerful now the sun is shining (some days!). Although we have had a great deal of rain this winter, there have not been many days when our volunteer drivers have had to scrape their car windows before setting off to collect their passenger and then having to contend with slippery roads.

We have had the usual trips to the local surgeries and hospitals. We've even had one to an appointment on a Saturday morning.

Currently we have 19 volunteers some who drive, some who deal with the phone and some the administration, but new volunteers are always welcome. Most requests are to take people from the village to doctors' surgeries and hospital appointments. Volunteers claim 45p per mile for fuel and any other expenses (such as parking) can be reimbursed. We have a parking permit for parking areas at both Bedford Hospitals which a driver may borrow.

If you need help, please phone 07969 982 970 and leave a message. One of our volunteers will return your call. If you need transport, please try to give us at least 24 hours' notice although we will always try to help at short notice. We ask for a donation of £4.00 per round trip for journeys under 10 miles as a contribution to the driver's fuel costs. A return journey to Luton & Dunstable Hospital is about 30 miles so drivers are entitled to ask for £14.00.

Sue Derrick (Chair) 07886 459225

Kate Smith (Honorary Secretary) 01234 740522



If the Library of Things concept is new to you then you'll find it's just like a regular library but with all sorts of 'things' rather than books. Items include sewing machine, electric drill, party crockery, garden equipment and much, much more.

Do have a little browse on our website:

www.shareflitwickandampthill.org/browse-items/ where you can see all of the items that we currently stock (with more being added all the time). On our website you can sign up to be a member for just £5 for the year and then you can reserve items for when you need them.

We're open every Saturday from 10-12 at The Rufus Centre, just around the left of the building. If Saturday from 10-12 really doesn't work for you then do get in touch at info@shareflitwickandampthill.org as one of our volunteers can often arrange to meet you at a mutually convenient time. As always, if the cost of the membership or loans would cause you hardship then

please get in touch in confidence and we will be happy to help.

RECYCLING USED STAMPS FOR CHARITY

Many thanks to everyone who has been passing used stamps to me throughout the year. I am happy to continue to act as a collection point (please pop through my letterbox at 29 Rectory Lane). I take the stamps to the Oxfam Shop in Bedford which is happy to receive everyday stamps, as well as more valuable ones, to sell to collectors worldwide and raise funds for the charity.

THE GREEN PIECE

***Good for the Planet, Good
for Everyone***



Welcome to “The Green Piece” – a place where we can share ideas on how to live a ‘greener’ life. Please send in suggestions.

Smashing Bluebells

Very soon Kingswood, Houghton Conquest, will have a magical violet-blue glow as our bluebells put on their smashing annual display. Found in ancient woodland and hedgerows, these are the native British bluebells with up to 20 dainty scented bell-shape flowers sprouting from one side of a stem, causing it to curve and nod or droop

(unlike the paler, less dainty, unscented Spanish bluebells whose flowers grow from all sides of the stem which is upright.) Almost half the world's native bluebells are found in the UK.

Other names for bluebells include: cuckoo's boots, granfer griggles, witches' thimbles, lady's nightcap, fairy flower, cra'tae (crow's toes)

Many insects reap the benefits of bluebells which flower earlier than many other plants. Woodland butterflies, bees and hoverflies all feed on their nectar. Bluebells reproduce both sexually by seed and asexually by the bulbs multiplying. This species is a slow grower, taking at least five years for a seed to develop into a bulb.

While the bluebell is still common throughout Britain, it is under threat locally from habitat destruction, hybridisation with non-native bluebells and the illegal trade of wild-collected bulbs. Bluebells can take years to recover from the damage caused by trampling, and if their leaves are crushed they can be weakened (as they can no longer photosynthesise). Trampled plants will not produce seed nor have the strength to reproduce vegetatively and may indeed die as the energy in the bulb is not replaced.

So please, whilst you enjoy the bluebells, keep to the footpaths and keep your dogs on leads so they don't trample the precious bluebells either. Enjoy the smashing bluebells without smashing bluebells!

Reminder: No Mow May – please leave a patch of grass uncut for wildflowers to grow as food for essential pollinators.

Rosalind Blevins
ros.blevins@btinternet.com



Trevor Blevins & the ZONITA Team.

Saturday 12th April 7:30pm: The Miracle Club

Tables can be reserved free of charge via email or Facebook. Licensed bar, ice creams and a selection of refreshments. Tickets available on the door.

<http://zonita.org.uk>

email: zonitacinema@gmail.com

[@ZonitaAmpthill](http://www.facebook.com/zonita.cinema)

Ramblings

This will be my last Ramblings column as I think I've rambled on enough over the last 6 or 7 years and am stepping down as editor for the Newsletter. I am being replaced by villager Lucy Spencer, a resident of some years and interested in village life and events. I am sure she will serve you well and bring her own style to the Newsletter over time.

Since the last Newsletter there has been sight of a yellow thing in the sky, although not a long-term appearance it seems. Wandering through our footpaths and woods continue to have a familiar theme.....





There have been a number of events in the village over the last couple of months, including Family Services at All Saints Church, the Garden Club Spring Show and various public and private social get-togethers at the village hall – many in aid of good causes.

Notably, a very successful fundraiser was held on 1st March at the Village Hall in aid of the Chemotherapy Suite, Primrose Unit, Bedford Hospital and raised a staggering £4,500!

After a lull in activity generally, during and for some time post Covid, it is good to see that the Village spirit has now been revived.

To close, a few pictorial highlights over the last few years...























See you around the village....

Pete

PCllr Pete Bullock

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Phone us on 01525 582002

or

Pop in for a chat and to meet the team



Pilates classes based in **Houghton Conquest village**. Small group classes (max 5) to ensure correct posture and alignment in a friendly **studio**.

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GROUP MAT TIMETABLE:

- **Group Mat Classes** **Monday 9.30am, 6.30pm & 7.30pm**
 Wednesday 9.30am, 10.30am
 Thursday 6.30pm & 7.30pm
 Friday 9.30am
- **Gentle Pilates** **Monday 10.30am**
 Thursday 9.30am
- **Power Pilates** **Friday 6.30am**

121 SESSIONS (TERM TIME):

- **121 Mat Pilates/Semiprivate Sessions** -Want to move on the mat with your friend, mum, sister, other half? Get in touch.
- **121 Reformer sessions** – Body Control trained and qualified here we review your alignment as you take load through the body and build strength. These sessions are an hour and 121. Please enquire for times.

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A note from your Editor...

We are always happy to receive your articles/comments/concerns/reports and hopefully I have included as many of these as I can.

Contact details are as follows:

Email: hcvillagenews@gmail.com

The Newsletter is also posted to the 4 Village Facebook pages and can be found on the Parish Council website under News:

<https://houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk/category/news/>

Please note:

Editorial comments are completely independent of and not a reflection of the views of the Parish Council. Letters and articles for inclusion are welcomed, subject to the standard appropriate editorial control. Any questions for the Parish Council should be directed at the Clerk to the Parish Council.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Around the Village

ART SOCIETY	Karen Moynihan	Email: houghtonconquestartsociety@outlook.com
CARE GROUP	Sue Derrick	07886 459225
FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH	Carol Juffs	381393
GARDEN CLUB	Margaret Whalley	740892
INDOOR BOWLS	Monica Mannings	743345
JIGSAW CLUB	Sue Derrick	07886 459225
VILLAGE HALL BOOKINGS	Christine Dean	741182
WOMENS' INSTITUTE	Shirley Johnson	740265

Help Lines

SAMARITANS	Call 116 123 Email: jo@samaritans.org
CRISIS TEXT LINE	Text "SHOUT" to 85258

Contacts outside the Village

AIRPORT (London Luton)	01582 405100
BEDFORD HOSPITAL	01234 355122
BUSES (Grant Palmer)	01525 719719
CHURCHES	
C of E Team Rector - Rev'd Fr Paul Messam SCP	01234 261477
Methodist - Rev. Silas Wood	01525 571392
D.H.S.S. - (Bedford)	01234 365155
SCHOOLS	
Lower School - Houghton Conquest	01234 740202
Middle - Stewartby	01234 768224
Senior - Wootton	01234 767123

Holywell School - Cranfield	01234 750381
LIBRARIES Bedford	01234 718178
Ampthill	0300 300 8053
Flitwick	0300 300 8057
ELECTRICITY (UK Power Networks) General Enquiries	0800 029 4285
ELECTRICITY (UK Power Networks) Power Cuts	0800 316 3105 or just 105
ANGLIAN WATER	0800 145145 08457 145145
HIGHWAYS Dept. (Helpline)	0300 300 8049
Forest of Marston Vale	01234 767037
Central Beds Council	0300 300 8000
POLICE (Emergency only!)	999
County H.Q.	01234 841212
Incidents needing non-urgent response	101
Reporting Anti-Social behaviour	101
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
RAILWAY - Travel Enquiries	0345 748 4950

Silverline	01923 207258
Bedford station	0345 748 4950
Flitwick station	0345 748 4950
DOCTORS	
Amphill - Houghton Close Surgery	01525 300898
- Oliver St Surgery	01525 631395
- Greensands Surgery	01525 631390
Kempston	01234 852222
REGISTRATION	
Marriage & archives	01525 403430
Births & Deaths	0300 300 8089.