

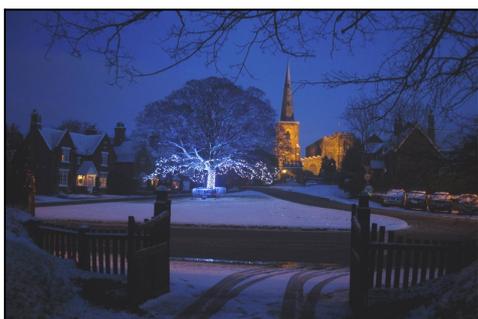


**Is this you?**



The May Day celebrations in Astbury are legendary and one of the highlights of the year. This year's event takes place on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May**, starting at 12.30pm. As this is the 150<sup>th</sup> year this heart-warming event has taken place, organisers want to make contact with as many previous May Queens as possible – it would be great to have them come along! Please contact Kath on 01260 290135 (don't worry, we won't expect you to squeeze into your dress again!). This year, new attractions will include a craft fair in the village hall, as well as the traditional favourites (if you'd like a stall, contact Kath). Help of *any* sort would be much appreciated, so do please come along to the Rectory on the Thursday or Friday evenings prior to the Saturday to help set up (from 6pm), or help to clear up on the Saturday evening, or join us at our next meeting, to be held in the Rectory on Wednesday 21st April at 7pm. Finally, a polite request – could villagers kindly avoid parking any cars by the church steps on the big day? Your help is appreciated!! Fingers crossed for good weather! See you in the refreshment tent!

**Christmas cards –  
Thanks for your support!**

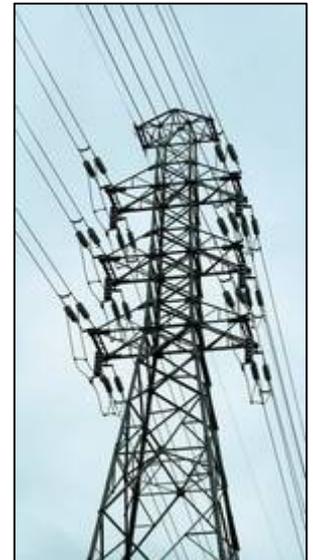


Sales of the Astbury Christmas card totalled over £1,000 – so a huge “thank you” to everyone who sold or bought them! The photograph above will be the new photograph to be used for next year's card, which we think is even better. With about 275 days left until Christmas, we're planning well ahead!

**Power cuts – more than our fair share?**



The Astbury area seems to get more than it's fair share of power cuts, and after a number of complaints, a senior representative from Scottish Power will join us at our May meeting on Wednesday 12th. Please feel free to come along and hear what he has to say! (Please note this meeting will start at 7pm as it is also our AGM so do come!) As we are increasingly frustrated with the slow response to our requests for road repairs and general maintenance in the Parish, we have asked Rod Menlove, who holds the Portfolio for the Environment for Cheshire East, to attend one of our meetings. We'll keep you informed.



**Gordon Ramsey to cook in the village hall!!**



Well, not quite...but after an entire new kitchen has been fitted, he certainly could! Until recently, most of the equipment in the village hall kitchen was that originally installed some 50 years ago, but after volunteers ripped out literally everything, the cupboards, worktops and

sinks were replaced with new stainless steel units, and a fantastic new state-of-the-art cooker, dishwasher and fridge installed – on top of a new floor and finished off with new wall tiles and paint!

With these unbeatable facilities, catering to the highest standards can be achieved on the premises, be it for light refreshments or a full wedding reception. Grants totaling over £4,500 helped fund the refurbishment, which surely makes our village hall the best in Cheshire!



Rates are very reasonable, and if you don't fancy doing that cooking yourself, high-quality catering can be arranged for you (but don't expect Gordon). Contact Toni Meakin on 01260 289250 for booking enquiries.

## Potholes!

The number of potholes appearing in Cheshire has increased dramatically of late – this is for a couple of reasons. It seems that the process of not only filling the hole, but the area around it and then ‘sealing’ the new tarmac to prevent further wear stopped some years ago (to save costs), with holes now simply being filled with a blob and thumped down! However, after the bad winter, it seems the previous method has now been re-adopted, along with the recruitment of 2 extra repair teams, so things should improve!



There is a new ‘hotline’ to report new potholes, and we are assured of a speedy response – call **0845 0020666**.



### True grit!

With vivid memories of pushing stranded cars through snow in the village not so long ago, we are hoping to arrange for a *tasteful* grit ‘bin’ to be installed. Discreetly positioned (probably near the post box), this should help prevent such chaos, injury and keep traffic moving in the future.

### Smallwood : The Future

Local residents are invited to a public consultation session about the ‘Village Design Statement’. This is how you can ‘have your say’ about any future development of the area – from the type of buildings allowed to street lighting, and is organised jointly by Cheshire East Council and a committee of residents. There will be an exhibition of the villages history, and a chance to ask questions. The sessions take place this Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> March in the Smallwood Village Hall from 10am-noon, and that evening from 5.30-7.30pm in the village school.

## About this newsletter...

Although published and funded by your Parish Council, we really do want to make both this newsletter and our website a ‘forum’ for all aspects of local life. Whilst it is our basic duty to help with getting potholes filled and consider planning applications on behalf of the community who elected us, we really want to help promote the local community, and all the wonderful things that go on within it – many of which you may not know about. After all, it’s our ‘spirit’ and love of life which makes Astbury, Moreton and the surrounding area special – not just the daffodils! If you are part of a local group, let us know when and where you meet, what you do and how people can join you. Contact Andy, on 01260 281194 or email [banks\\_a@sky.com](mailto:banks_a@sky.com). We’ll start a ‘What’s on in Astbury’ list from the next issue. And why not send us a photo and report of anything your group has been doing recently? Celebrate success!

## Bits & bobs

- Our May meeting, on the 12<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Meeting – please come along and tell us what you think of us & how we can help!! (starts 7pm)
- To rival the WAGS (Women of Astbury Group), there is rumor of a rival group for the men! Watch this space chaps!
- Don’t forget our website at [www.astbury-parish.org.uk](http://www.astbury-parish.org.uk)
- There is a ‘Punks & Rockers’ night in the village hall on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April - lock up your daughters! - with a live band & food. Dress up! Contact Ali on 07982911773.



## Ladies Fellowship & Women’s Institute



The Ladies Fellowship meet in the village hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. The April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting is the AGM, followed by an intriguing talk about buttons – bring any old buttons you may have in a drawer along, because you may be amazed how much they are worth! The May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting has a talk from Ken Young about the activities of the Rotary Club. A visit to Port Sunlight is planned for July. Contact Carol Goodwin on 01260 274190.

The Women’s Institute meet in the village hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7.30p. On April 7<sup>th</sup> there is a fashion show, with M&S & Next clothes at bargain prices, May 5<sup>th</sup> has a talk by Jane Shepherd – “From Polio to TV Presenting & Beyond” and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> “From figleaf to thong”, (sounds interesting - your newsletter editor may well attend!!)...Contact Sue Clark on 01260 272439.

## Who Are We?

Roger Sutton 01260 273677

Charles Kennerly 01260 272205

Mel Lawton 01260 278384

Peter Cliff 01260 278641

Andy Banks (Newsletter Editor) 01260 281194

Nick Sharman 01260 271374

Rob Lomas 01260 272061

Lindis Pattison-Tadman 01260 27004

Jane Shelmerdine 01260 279870

Dave Roberts 01260 275010

Terry Depledge 01260 271058

**Chairman** : John Carter 01260 275828

**Clerk** : Charlie Pointon : 01260 274891

We meet in the Astbury Village Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. Please feel free to come along!

If you have an item for the next newsletter, or any comments, contact Andy Banks. Read reports of our meetings in ‘The Chronicle’ and remember our website – [www.astbury-parish.org.uk](http://www.astbury-parish.org.uk) Finally, contact us via e-mail at [astcfp@tesco.net](mailto:astcfp@tesco.net)



## Meet the 'new' Rector – Jonathan Sharples

Jonathon became the new Rector at Astbury St Mary's church in July 2009. The church is the visual centre of the parish, and he – along with his wife Ella – hope to make it the centre of the community. In this interview, we asked him about settling in and his plans for the future...

### *Tell us a little about yourself and your family*

Yorkshire born, Leamington Spa and London bred. We have 4 children ranging in age from 16 to 24: one in York (Becca) two in Brighton (Ben and Tom) and Annie at home. Plus Harvey (pretty cat) and Finn (pretty daft dog)

### *How did your journey bring you to Astbury?*

How far back do you want me to travel? Geographically it's been London, West Coast of Scotland, Chester, Sale and Astbury. Church-wise it's been Catholic childhood, a decade in the Independent Church from my mid-twenties and into the Anglican Church from mid-thirties and on into the future.



### *Did you see Astbury as a 'ready-made' parish that you would simply accept as it was, or as a challenge?*

As in many things, (he says, stroking chin wisely), the answer lies somewhere in between. On any journey, you obviously have to start from where people are.

#### **Baby & toddler group**

*The new baby & toddler group meets in the village hall every Wednesday afternoon from 1pm to 3pm. A variety of toys and activities are available, along with refreshments. The atmosphere is very relaxed, and everyone is welcome!*



### *Surely Astbury is very different to your previous church? You are comparatively young and this is a fairly 'sleepy' parish – would a busier, town church not have been more appealing?*

Well, I've been here 8 months now and the parish hasn't felt sleepy. Though it is totally different from our last church, we clearly felt a 'calling' to come here, and that's difficult to ignore for too long.

### *What has given you the most pleasure?*

That's easy – the live nativity we did at Christmas. It was a wonderful evening, with a fantastic sense of warmth. We certainly couldn't have done that in our previous church.

### *What have you done during your first few months here?*

We've tried to get a feel for where people are. St Mary's is at least three churches in one with a very different dynamic and congregation at each of the three services on a Sunday. We've also noted that the Village is a brilliant, fascinating and, for some, a slightly bruised place. And a good place to be.

### *What do you see as your biggest challenge?*

Balancing the needs of Astbury and Smallwood churches and giving the proper time to both; secondly, to seek to enable people in this parish to feel that St Mary's is their village church rather than someone else's.

### *Tell us about your plans for the future*

I'm very excited at the potential of the new Toddler Group running at the Village Hall on Wednesdays. Also the continuing growth of the people staying on for coffee and cakes after every 11 a.m. morning service and sherry after the evening services. A bowls competition in June. Extending the number of nights that the village puts on the live nativity. Getting the church opened for maybe 4 hours each weekday. Making Rectory Cider and going to the gym twice a week.



**Jonathon can be contacted at the rectory on 01260 272625 or by e-mail at [rector@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rector@hotmail.co.uk). The church website can be viewed at [www.astburychurch.org.uk](http://www.astburychurch.org.uk) If all else fails....see him in church or even knock on his door!**