

Cottered and Throcking Parish Groups, Clubs and Societies Reports May 2023

Ardeley and Cottered WI Report • Rita Beasley (Secretary)

At the beginning of April 2022 we had 22 full paid-up members plus 1 dual member and in February 2023 we still had 22 members plus 1 dual member despite the fact 5 members did not renew their membership, 6 new members joined, and sadly we lost two of our long-standing members Jennifer in January and Doreen in February. Our average meeting attendance was 15. We continue to use Zoom (thanks to Lisa and Mark) for our Committee meetings.

A huge thanks to Kathy who manages to keep us on the "straight and narrow" as far as finances are concerned and even manages to give us a few "treats." We managed to boost the finances by holding very successful cake sales on Ardeley Village Green in August and at Cottered Christmas Market in November.

Thanks also go to Jacquie for continuing to do an excellent job in maintaining our Facebook page and Lisa as MCS representative and of course Trish for her excellent reports in the local magazines. Not to be forgotten is Yvonne who despite her mobility issues manages to attend the Council meeting as our delegate.

What have we been up to over the last year. It began in March with Sheila Grimmand giving us a very interesting talk on the Anthony Nolan trust, She began by telling us the history behind the trust which is 50 years old and continued by telling us how she became involved and travelled throughout the world to obtain the lifesaving product.

April is always our AGM which was facilitated by Joyce Gray accompanied by an assistant. Unfortunately, Lesley was unwell so Trish ran the meeting. Lesley was voted as President and the existing committee agreed to continue in post.

At our birthday party in May one of our guests was Gill Price who was a regular Zoom speaker throughout the pandemic. There was a hiccup with provision of the salmon. Kathy searched the supermarkets without success and in the end, she ordered the salmon from "Cook." Everyone agreed it was very good.

With it being the Queen's Platinum jubilee in June we decided to celebrate it at our June meeting with a picnic on Ardeley village Green luckily the weather was good.

We eventually recognised the stranger in our midst in July. it was Trish dressed in her Olympic volunteer outfit Trish kindly agreed to replace the Buttons and Bows talk by giving a talk on her experience as a Gamesmaker at the 2012 Olympic games.

One of our new members Janet Westerman welcomed us into her garden in August for our annual garden party In September we welcomed John Harlow who spoke about George Bernard Shaw and his purchase of Shaw corner in 1906 where he entertained Lord Astor, Charlie Chaplin Lawrence of Arabia etc. He used the writing hut in the Shaw Corner garden to write Pygmalion, Arms, and the Man etc.

Roger Gomm gave a very interesting and informative illustrated talk on the subject of "Fungi." in October and in November another local resident John Patterson answered the question "where do drugs come from" He specifically spoke about the development of the tamoxifen drug which was originally developed as a birth control drug but evolved into a drug for breast cancer. It gave us a fantastic insight into how drugs are created, tested and put into the market place,

To celebrate Christmas at our December meeting we went to the Rising Sun for a lovely Christmas meal.

Thanks go to Pauline who, for our January meeting, organised our annual trip to see the pantomime at the Gordon Craig theatre

In February Kate a friend of Lesley who works as a volunteer for the Herts and Essex Air Ambulance told us how she became a volunteer and reminded us It is not part of the NHS, receives limited Government funding, is a charity and relies on donations.

Unfortunately, the March meeting was cancelled due to the snow which was disappointing as Berna was due to demonstrate Easter decorations.

Well, that's it folks for another year and on behalf of the committee I hope you continue to support our WI as if you don't use it, you'll lose it!!

Badminton Report • Jim Egginton

No report

Bell Ringing St John the Baptist Cottered Report • Christine Robinson

Another mile stone year for Cottered Bell Ringer and tower. A full peal was rung at St John the Baptist in July which was the first time in since 2005.

Three quarter peal was also rung, and Jenny Thompson completed her first quarter peal at Wallington in January 2023. Well done Jenny!

We had visiting bands from West Anglian Guild, Sawbridgeworth and Hackney and we rung for 3 local weddings, the Queen's Jubilee in July.

Unfortunately, Neville Chuck died in July. Neville was the previous tower captain and at his request we rung at his funeral service. We also toiled a bell to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

We regularly ring for the Sunday services and our normal practice is on a Wednesday afternoon. If you are interested in learning to ring, please do get in touch.

Tuesday, 17 January 2023	Cottered (St John the Baptist), Hertfordshire	1296 Manganese Delight Minor
Saturday, 19 November 2022	Cottered (St John the Baptist), Hertfordshire	1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor
Saturday, 30 July 2022	Cottered (St John the Baptist), Hertfordshire	5040 Spliced Surprise Minor (10m)
Saturday, 25 June 2022	Cottered (St John the Baptist), Hertfordshire	1296 Bourne Surprise Minor

Book Club Report • Christine Robinson

We have read an eclectic range of books again this year. The books are all borrowed from Hertfordshire Library service, and a chosen by individual members on a rotational basis.

We meet every 6 weeks or so, in various members' homes.

This year we have read:

- Rooster Bar: John Grisham
- Consolation: Garry Disher
- Ghosts Dolly Alderton
- Shuggie Bain Douglas Stuart
- The Doll Factory: Elizabeth Macneal
- The Lamplighters: Ema Stonex
- And a selection of Anthony Trollope books.

Cottered Carpet Bowls Report • Eddie and Jo Hayden

The Carpet Bowls Club has been running for over 20 years. As in previous years, we have lost a few members but have gained a few new ones.

Bowls is a very popular sport; new members will be very welcome to join us. We meet every Monday 7.00pm to 9.00pm (except Bank Holidays) in Cottered Village Hall. Come and give it a go.

Cottered Cavaliers & Cavalettes Golf Society Report • John Harwood

No report.

Cottered Footpaths Report • Roger Gomm

The heat wave of 2022 meant that fewer paths were obstructed by nettles last summer, and despite the wet start to this year most of the paths have remained walkable if rather muddy. Thanks to all those, most unbidden and unknown, who clear sections of overgrown footpaths: the clearing of the hollow lane at Stocking Hill was particularly welcome.

My role as the go-to-person for reporting such problems has been made far less important by the easy to use HCC Highways Department on-line system for reporting obstructed footpaths and other rights of way problems. To access that search for 'Hertfordshire Highways fault reporting,' and then select 'Public Rights of Way.' But you can still contact me by e-mail roger.gomm@btinternet.com or by phone on Cottered 368.

Cottered Ramblers Report • Roger Gomm

The ramblers have perambulated at a leisurely pace on each of the first Sunday in the month over the past year, walking from Cottered, Rushden, Ardeley, Walkern, Wadesmill, Aspenden, Weston Woods and Radwell Meadows. Aconites, Snowdrops, Blue Bells and Orchids we have admired but we missed the wild garlic again. Walks start at 2 p.m. first Sunday in the month and are usually two and a half to three miles. If you want to be notified e-mail roger.gomm@btinternet.com or phone Cottered 368.

Cottered & Throcking News Report • Jenny Thomson Editor

The sad death of Neville Chuck on 27 June 2022 was a big loss to many of us. Neville was editor of *Cottered & Throcking News* for over 50 years (since the magazine's first edition in June 1970), and he made me his co-editor a couple of years ago. I still miss our regular talks about each issue's contents and contributors: he was a great guide and mentor to me and we never had a single disagreement since I first became his publisher in around 2010. The deluge of tributes to Neville that poured into Cottered Village's Facebook page during July says it all. We miss him, but his spirit will always be the very heart of *Cottered & Throcking News*.

It has been a year of royal events, with the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II, followed by our monarch's death and the subsequent Accession to the throne of HM King Charles III. Neville was a great royalist, and I have drawn on much of his collected information in covering these significant events from a Cottered point of view over the last 12 months.

Before he died Neville also passed to me a significant number of digitised old photos and property records that he collated over the decades, in his dedicated mission to put Cottered on the map. The black and white photos in Neville's archive make a particularly welcome contribution from time to time when I post them on to Cottered Village's page on Facebook: they invariably drawing comments and interest from amongst our parish's followers. With help from others in the parish I am now making plans to ensure that all the information is securely and accessibly stored for the benefit of our parishioners in the future.

Producing the parish magazine is a significant team effort, and rightly involves many parishioners. We have so many valued contributors now – of articles, stories, and photographs – that I can't list them all. You know who you are, and we couldn't produce the magazine without you!

Our 13-strong delivery team (led by Subscriptions Manager Jo Hayden) distributes the magazine without fail at the beginning of each month of publication, through every letterbox in the villages of Cottered and Throcking, regardless of whether annual subscriptions are paid. But we welcome the £5 annual voluntary subs from those who are able to pay! Without our subs we would not be able to continue. Details of how you can pay are in the June 2023 edition. Around half of our income comes from our valued advertisers, some of whom have supported us continuously for several decades. Advertisers provide a great source to our readers of local contacts and services, and we value them highly.

Our finances continue to be managed admirably by Jean Thrussell, our Treasurer, who makes sure we stay in funds. Thank you to everyone in our villages who keeps *Cottered & Throcking News* alive. It is your magazine, and the more contributions we have from you the better. You can email copy, short stories (maximum 500 words) or photographs to magazine@cotte.red I will be delighted to hear from you!

Cottered Village Appreciation Society Report • John Harwood Bee

No report

Cottered Village Day Report • Alistair Hill

Cottered Village Day continues to provide a day of entertainment to residents of Cottered and surrounding villages. This year it will be held on Saturday 1st July and will continue to offer a day and evening of music, attractions, food and trade stands. We are pleased to announce that we are able to return to offering the evening music without charge.

Village Day continues to facilitate the raising of monies for Village clubs and societies by offering free participation to raise monies however they see fit.

As of 27th March 23, cash in the bank stood at £5,153 with circa £200 owing - this total amount being estimated as sufficient to cover the eventuality of two years of poor weather or other such adverse events which may result in a liability without a commensurate income to cover.

The Village Day Committee is currently seeking a Treasurer and some volunteers to help during the day - we would very much welcome anyone able to assist with either.

Cottered Village Hall Report • Colin Bayles

Background and administration

It may be appropriate to remind you that what we do and how we do it is set out formally in a Declaration of Trust from 1963 and a Charity Commission Scheme from 1977. By the way, there are several good old local names in the Declaration including — Rev. Joseph Charlton — Thomas Grant Kingsley — Frank Jelks — Benjamin Alan Edwards — William Nicholls Sanders — Robert James Dredge — John William Pumfrey. The site was transferred to these representatives “... for the purposes of a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants of Cottered and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex or of political religious or other opinions in particular for use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.”

We held our annual general meeting this year on 24th April. Notice was given and this meeting was open to the public. A report and accounts were presented for the preceding year. Five committee members were elected for the coming year and other members appointed to represent local organisations. All become trustees and must, as the old document says, “declare acceptance of and willingness to act in the trusts of the deed and of the scheme.”

Last year

The facility has continued to prove very popular and well used. We achieved the objectives set for us and we are on a very solid financial footing. Thankfully we have come through the Covid era in good shape. During the last 12 months we have made progress towards installing security cameras, developing new regimes for cleaning and bar operation, ensuring good relationships with and between hirers and improving letting procedures and documentation. We have looked carefully at becoming licensed for weddings and of extending the building but have decided not to pursue either possibility. We have been able to carry out routine maintenance, repairs, and improvements as and when needed, rather than only when funds permitted. If we were a school, we believe Ofsted would rate us nearer “outstanding” than fit for “special measures.” We have had a good year.

Next year

We have not made a check list of projects for next year but our overall aim is to continue providing a well maintained, well equipped and improved facility and to have the resources (financial and manpower) to do so.

Our people

After many years of dedication and hard work Alice Chamberlain has taken well deserved retirement from her role as hall cleaner. We thank her and wish her well.

For several years our joint letting secretaries Coral Wild and Gary King have worked enthusiastically to promote the hall and to ensure our hirers are happy. Other priorities have now taken them away from the hall. Our gratitude for their service and our best wishes go with them.

Our secretary John Harwood -Bee, having been on the management committee for well over 20 years, has quite reasonably asked several times to be allowed to retire. Permission was refused unless and until he could produce a top-drawer replacement and even then only provided he stay on to ensure a comfortable transition. We are now letting him step back gradually. He has been hugely influential on what the hall is and does and on its reputation locally and further afield. We cannot thank him enough.

That top-drawer replacement is Elisa Bellomo – already hard at work and clearly on the ball.

The rewards

Around the village and neighbourhood, the reward for these efforts over many years takes the shape of an attractive, well regarded and busy community facility. For members of the management committee the reward is a sense of achievement, of time well spent and of duty done. The chairman thanks his colleagues and all hirers and other supporters of the hall.

Cottered Voices Report • David Broxup

No report

Cottered & Throcking Website Report • Terry Pratt

Cottered and Throcking Parish has a new website Cotteredlife.co.uk. It is driven by Janis Hall who is content supremo and in charge of the day-to-day running. I have provided design, hosting and tech help.

It has no official status beyond the absence of anything better but it aims to serve the parish well.

Objectives

Our aims are twofold: to be a good advert for our community and make villagers want to share the site address with their relatives in Australia; and to stay up to date with events in the village, and nearby, and the changing seasons.

Content policy

To fit around and complement the existing excellent resources in the village.

- We will leave editorial copy, village stories and advertising opportunities as the preserve of the Parish magazine;
- Fast-moving news, comment and community is left to the well-curated and up-to-date village Facebook pages;
- Council decisions, information, and local government news affecting the villages we will leave to the council minutes, notice boards and the council's website.

However, we will actively aim to promote and work with all of those resources.

Contacts

If any semi-official body wants an email address of @cottedredlife we can set those up and forward to people's existing mail addresses. We have a sophisticated email delivery system but will require them to take responsibility for the correspondence and ensure the folders are maintained. We reserve the right not to provide or to retire these.

Finance

It has so far been fairly inexpensive to run (£5.50 to buy the domain name for the first year) and although these will fees increase in future years, we are happy to fund the site.

Parish ideas and contribution

We are actively seeking these.

State of play

- The site has been up and functioning since launch in early March.
- Janis organises and keeps up-to-date an events calendar, which (in my extensive research) should be the envy of pretty much any other village website in the UK.
- The SEO work is outstanding. It is on my to-do list for when I can fit in time around other projects. Until then it is unlikely to get to impact the search engine rankings.

Friends of Cottedred Church Report • Simon Cassia (Chairman)

The Friends of Cottedred Church (FOCC) support the rector, church wardens and church council to "maintain, beautify and keep in good order the fabric, internal fittings and furnishings of the church, churchyard and boundary wall of St John the Baptist, Cottedred."

Committee

The Committee during the period comprised:

Chairman: Simon Cassia

Treasurer: Kathy Cassels

Secretary: Ingrid Weekes

Members: Trish Agnew

Rita Broxup

John Harwood-Bee

The Rev Mark Bailey is an ex office member of the committee.

Events

2022 saw the most ambitious programme of events for some time, due in no small part to the energy and enthusiasm of Rev Mark Bailey.

Village Day 25 June

The Friends ran a Teddy Shy which made £157 from the teddies kindly donated by parishioners and obtained by Ingrid. Rev Mark Bailey was excellent at attracting "trade" for the shy, showing he had missed his true calling as a huckster at travelling fairs. We also took £120 from the car boot sale stall holders.

Saturday Night at the Movies 17 Sept

The Barton Stacey Chamber Choir (Tenor: Rev Mark Bailey) entertained some 80 villagers and guests in St John the Baptist Church with a selection of extremely well-sung songs. The event raised £674.

Summer Art Exhibition 22/23 Oct

The Friends supported Janet Westerman in her art exhibition, held in St John the Baptist Church. The exhibition ran over two days and was extremely well attended, selling 33 paintings, and raising £95 for the Ukrainian appeal. The Friends raised £748 from the hire of space, sales of cards and the cafeteria.

Christmas Market 26 Nov

The Christmas Fair, also held in the church, was another extremely well-attended event. There were 14 stalls, with the Friends selling a mixture of candles, lavender and honey. The cafeteria served soup, cakes and drinks. Overall, we made £785 from this event.

Friends Christmas Get-Together 18 Dec

The usual Friends "Get Together" was held at Lower Farm Barn with the kind support from Ingrid and Leon Snell. About 50 people attended and £404 was raised from the raffle and other sales.

Financial Position 31 Dec 2022

Income: £3,590.99

Expenditure: £309.47

Net Profit: £3,281.52

Funds at Bank: £22,034.8

Royal British Legion Cottered Branch Report • John Harwood Bee (Branch Secretary)

No report

The Children's Society Report • Simon Cassia (Box Coordinator)

The Children's Society runs two activities in the village.

Change Boxes

The Society provides a box for people who want to collect and donate their small change to the Society. This year we had 10 box holders. When the boxes were opened in October, we collected the sum of £211.00, which is similar to previous years.

Christingle Service

The Christingle service, the first after the Covid epidemic, was held on 4 December. £43 was raised.