

## Cottered and Throcking Parish Groups, Clubs and Societies Reports May 2022

### **Ardeley and Cottered WI Report • Rita Beasley (Secretary)**

March 2021 and Lock Down had become a way of life although it still had a massive impact on Ardeley WI as well as the local community. We tried our best to continue providing interesting talks and get together whenever possible throughout the year. Sadly, in June 2021 we lost Janet Naylor a long-standing member of Ardeley WI. Members of the WI and Jill Profit and Joyce Spakman, representing County, attended Janet's funeral. After the internment members sang Jerusalem around the grave.

At the beginning of April 2021, we had 22 full paid-up members plus 1 dual member and in February 2022 we still had 22 members plus 1 dual member. Our average meeting attendance on Zoom was 14 (what would we have done without it).

Thanks to Kathy who manages to keep us on the "straight and narrow" as far as the finances are concerned. We even managed to boost the finances by holding a very successful cake sale in August.

Our thanks go to Jacquie for continuing to do an excellent job in maintaining our Facebook page and Lisa as MCS representative and Zoom co-ordinator and of course Trish for her excellent reports in the local magazines. No formal AGM was held last year due to the limited number of members able to use Zoom and the current Committee agreed to remain in situ.

In April Molly Dooling a Cottered resident and part time Milliner told us millinery is her hobby but she would like it to become a full-time job. She showed us some slides which explained how millinery came from the word Milan in Italy. Also, the term 'mad as a hatter' came from hatters who used mercury in the hat making process and this had a diverse effect on them.

We had several talks from Gill Price who was an amazing speaker. The first talk was in May when she told us she used to work in the Palace of Westminster as a police officer. Her presentation took us on a virtual tour of the Palace of Westminster telling the history of the building and interesting facts about how if you are an MP, you can get married inside the chapel inside the Palace.

In June Lesley welcomed Ann DeBock from Church Farm who explained the benefits of a Care farm which provides health, social or educational care services for individuals from a range of vulnerable groups (people with learning difficulties, Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, mental illness, those with autism disorders, and excluded young people) with a supervised, structured programme of farming related activities.

July was really special as it was a lovely sunny afternoon when members gathered together for a picnic around the WI bench on Ardeley Village Green. It was great to see old friends in person for a catch up after such a long time.

We had another chance to see everyone in the flesh in August when we held the delayed May 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday party at the Rising Sun.

As we were still under some restriction in September and the weather was kind to us, we held another picnic on the village Green which enabled more members to join us.

In October we returned to Zoom meetings and had our second talk from Gill Price. She told us the history of Highgate Cemetery which was built during the Victorian era when death rates were high. She told us about some of the interesting people that are buried there such as George Michael, Malcolm McLaren, George Eliot and of course Karl Marx.

Mike Leverton was another repeat Zoom speaker in November where he recollected a family's experiences in the first world war talking about the notes Emily Law had written in her diary "Daily Thoughts" which he found in a second-hand book shop.

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December the WI had a Stall at the Cottered Village Social event and 14 ladies signed up to say they were interested in joining the WI if it was held in Cottered. This led to a discussion and members were asked their feelings on moving the meeting to Cottered. A few members expressed their reservations and Lesley agreed further discussion is required with the members who were not at the meal. We requested a change of name to Ardeley and Cottered WI and this has been approved by County.

We seem to be regulars at the Rising Sun as in December held our Christmas meal there when everyone dressed in their Christmas finery.

Thanks are given to Pauline who organised the January Panto which seems to be a regular annual event and everyone enjoyed it as they want to go to a Panto next year. Still using Zoom Gill Price's third talk was in February when she gave us an illustrated talk on St John Ambulance which she is a member. She said one of her pet hates

is the media tend to call the organisation St John's Ambulance. The talk began in AD603 when the organisation was founded in Jerusalem until present day

Our first meeting in Cottered was in March when Lesley introduced Sheila Grimmand who gave us a very interesting talk on the Anthony Nolan trust. Sheila began by telling us the history behind the trust which is 50 years old, she then told us how she became involved and how she has travelled throughout the world to obtain the lifesaving product.

That brings us up to date. Let's hope there are no more Covid restrictions in the future and we can get back to a 'normal' way of life.

### **Badminton • Jim Egginton**

The players who congregate to play Badminton at the Village Hall have done so since the end of the lockdown period as soon as they could when restrictions permitted.

It has been well attended nearly every week with up to 12 players from the village and its environs, sharing the one court. We have had several new players to make up for a few players who have left.

The standard varies and is fairly even between men and women. We play mixed doubles and men's and women's doubles. It is a social occasion as well as sporting, and does involve expending a lot of energy but we do cater for all levels quite well. I think I can say all attending are very keen and they do enjoy themselves.

We are always on the lookout for new players of any standard; the cost is a modest £2 from 7pm to 9pm on a Wednesday night.

### **Bell Ringing St John the Baptist Cottered Report • Christine Robinson**

We were given permission to start ringing again for services on 3 bells in May 2021, and as COVID restrictions ended we resumed regularly ringing practice in September 2021.

We struggle to get a full band together for regularly Sunday services, but aim to ring, if only one bell every Sunday.

The bells have been rung regularly since last summer with:

- 2 weddings
- 5 visiting bands ringing quarter peals
- a visit from the Young Herts Ringers
- and weekly Wednesday afternoon practises

We have 9 paid up members of the Herts County Ass. of Change Ringers, who support with learning and skills. The band's skills have improved over the year, and we are starting to ring methods along with call changes. We have only been able to achieve with outside support from the county, which we are grateful for.

It is very difficult to get enthusiastic to ring in a cold church during the winter, but we all appreciate Jenny Thomson's sterling work in keeping the practices going throughout the year.

It helps there is now a kitchen in the church for a hot cup of tea! And a toilet.

We practise every Wednesday, mostly in the afternoon but once a month on Wednesday evening.

We are always looking for new ringers, or if you would like to just listen to the bells you are most welcome to pop into the church and listen to us ring.

### **Book Club Report • Terry Pratt**

Cottered Book Club is a sociable way for villagers to expand their reading and discover more about books and literature. It meets approximately every month at a member's house in the village.

Working closely with Buntingford library, a different book or author is chosen each month and the books are provided to club members. At the monthly meeting, the books are discussed and members also talk through other books they have found interesting and make recommendations.

A charge of £10 a year is made to cover library costs.

We are actively looking for new members. Anyone interested in joining the book club should contact Christine at [chrisrob@dircon.co.uk](mailto:chrisrob@dircon.co.uk) or terry at [terry@interactpublishing.co.uk](mailto:terry@interactpublishing.co.uk).

### **Cottered Carpet Bowls • Eddie and Jo Hayden**

The Carpet Bowls Club has been running for over 20 years. During the past 2 years we have lost a few members either through moving away or bad health, however, the membership has now increased again.

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). Come and give it a go.

## **Cottered Cavaliers & Cavalettes Golf Society Report • John Harwood**

The golf society is this year entering its 20th anniversary. To celebrate we shall be running 6 tournaments between April and September. Membership is holding steady having attracted new residents and we continue to welcome guest players at our events. Despite the Pandemic we still managed to play some matches between lockdowns and are delighted that all our regular courses have reopened this year, mostly unscathed. Subscription for this year is £10 for a single and £15 for a couple.

The 2022 schedule is: 21st May Chesfield Downs. 18th June Mount Pleasant, Henlow. 23rd July The Cambridge, 20th August Wyboston Lakes and 24th September Whitehill GC. If anybody is interested in joining the society or coming to one of the games as a guest, please contact Rita Broxup on 01763 281234 or John Bee on 01763 281581.

## **Cottered & Throcking News Report • Jenny Thomson Co-Editor**

*Cottered & Throcking News* has been published at least six times every year since June 1970. My Co-Editor Neville Chuck, in spite of poor recent health, has been my stalwart colleague throughout the last 12 months, working with me by telephone and email from his home, even in recent times from a hospital bed. I'm pleased to say he's back home now.

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 2022 edition.

Over half of our income comes from our valued advertisers, some of whom have supported us continuously, even for several decades. Advertisers provide a great source to our readers of local contacts and services, and we value them highly.

Our finances are managed admirably by Jean Thrussell, our Treasurer, who makes sure we stay in funds.

Significant local events we've featured in the last 12 months have included:

- A very warm welcome to our new Vicar Mark Bailey – who swiftly became a regular contributor to the magazine – and his family.
- A parish tribute to HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, following his death on 9 April.
- Fundraising for the new toilet, kitchenette and cupboards in St John the Baptist, Cottered, now installed and bringing welcome comfort to visitors and regular worshippers.
- The End-of-Lockdown Festival on 31 July, held on the Recreation Ground.
- The Charity Quiz Night on 15 October, organised by Cottered Village Appreciation Society and sponsored by EHDC.
- The Village Social Event held in the Village Hall on 3 December, organised by Friends of Cottered Church.

It's great to be able to feature these events (and many others I haven't listed), but the magazine is more than a journalistic newsletter. Through our pages, parishioners can learn of upcoming events (such as Christmas services) as well as the ongoing activities of the many clubs and societies in our active village, like the Horticultural Society. We're pleased to help our village communications stay strong, and we value all your contributions.

Thank you to everyone in our villages who keeps *Cottered & Throcking News* alive. It's 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](mailto:magazine@cotte.red) Neville and I will be delighted to hear from you!

## **Cottered Village Appreciation Society • John Harwood Bee**

Throughout the pandemic the Society has continued to organise volunteers for a variety of activities around the village. Most recently work parties have tidied the churchyard, cleared old leaves from village greens, reinstated the Petanque Court and assisted with the renovation of the Sports Pavilion. Particular thanks must be given to Paul Weekes for the excellent work he has done on restoring a notable grave in the churchyard. Also worthy of mention are David Broxup and Andrew & Jenny Thomson for the hard work they have put in clearing the rubbish and cultivating the area surround the Petanque Court. This has enabled Cottered Village Petanque Club to commence play. (If you fancy trying your hand at Petanque then please contact David Broxup on 01763 281234). In October 2021 the society assisted the East Herts District Council chairman with the organisation of his Charity Quiz Night and raised £1000 for Cancer Research.

Christine Robinson is organising a Jubilee Picnic event on the playing field on Sunday 5th June for which you should be receiving details through your door soon.

With the help of Brian Murchie, the society has worked with the Parish Council to remove dead tree stumps and to carry out numerous other tasks around the village.

If you would like to become a CVAS Volunteer please contact John Harwood-Bee: [jhb@cotte.red](mailto:jhb@cotte.red) to register your interest. Your contact details will never be shared with others without your permission. The society maintains an employer's liability insurance policy to cover all volunteers and events.

The society maintains a confidential e mail list that is use to inform residents of village events and activities and to call for volunteers. If you would like to be included on the list but are not able to volunteer, just send your contact details to John Harwood-Bee.

## **Cottered Village Hall • Colin Bayles**

### **AGM**

Our AGM is open to the public and was held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Reports and accounts for 2021-2022 were presented and adopted.

Five committee members were elected for the year 2022-2023 and other members appointed to represent various local organisations.

### **Covid era**

The chairman referred to the span of the "covid era" as it affected the village hall. At the AGM 2 years ago, lockdown had just started. At the AGM 1 year ago, we had learned to live with it and understood the procedures and support involved. At this year's AGM the formal legislative restrictions have gone but Covid is a continuing feature of our lives and arrangements at the village hall. He doubted whether at next year's AGM Covid would be gone and forgotten.

### **Road to recovery**

Though if fell within the covid era, 2021 – 2022 was perhaps the start of a road to recovery. It had been spent partly on running the village hall soundly and safely within the framework of Covid restrictions and partly planning and preparing for village hall operation beyond the shadow of Covid

Both involve focus and action from committee members and have received it.

### **Financial firm footing**

This had been achieved without loss of a firm financial footing, as the accounts and treasurer confirm.

### **No resting on laurels**

Even or particularly in these difficult times the management committee had not rested on its laurels. Issues and activities dealt with include –

Security cameras

Building extension

Weddings

Cleaning regime

Bar operation - status, responsibility, recording, charitable and financial impacts

Inter-hirer relationships and priorities

Lettings – procedures, documentation, security, liability

Maintenance, repairs, improvements

### **Committee members**

None of this has been achieved without commitment, enthusiasm, time and effort from committee members as individuals and groups. They have all contributed generously and were thanked by the chairman. He would not name names except to say that Peter Thody was now to be replaced by Trish Agnew as representative of the luncheon club – both were thanked for their valuable input given and anticipated.

## **2022 – 2023**

The management approach required during the year to come is a mixture of “steady as you go” with ambition for a better, more diverse, more flexible, possibly extended and more “Q2C21” facility.

But we must never overlook (as our Trust Deed puts it) that the village hall is “for the inhabitants of Cottered and the neighbourhood ... without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinion and 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.” The said inhabitants and the chairman appreciate committee members’ past, continuing and promised efforts to these ends.

### **Cottered Voices Report • David Broxup**

We are slowly regrouping after lockdown and will be leading community singing for the Jubilee.

### **Friends of Cottered Church Report • Simon Cassia (Chairman)**

Due to Covid no AGM was held in 2021. Consequently, this report covers the period Jan 2020 – December 2021. Our activities during these two years have been severely curtailed by the Covid epidemic. We have not held any fundraising events and our only activities has been fund raising for the new toilet, which we are now delighted to see completed, and a “Get to Know Cottered” event in December 2021. However, a ‘back to normal’ programme is planned for 2022.

The committee members during the period were (in alphabetical order):

Trish Agnew	Rev Mark Bailey (from September 2021)
David Broxup	Rita Broxup
Kathy Cassells (Treasurer)	Simon Cassia (Chairman)
John Harwood-Bee	Bill Johnston (Secretary: resigned autumn 2020)
Jill Patterson (resigned autumn 2020)	Ingrid Weekes (Secretary)

The committee has been significantly energised by the active participation of Rev Mark Bailey.

#### **Activities During the Year**

##### *Fund-A-Loo*

The committee raised £24,967.16 from individual donation and a grant from Allchurches Trust. The gift aid reclaimed increased the sum available for the project to £30,715.91.

##### *Get to Know Cottered*

Some 15 village organisations and societies set out their stalls in the village hall on the evening of 3 December 2021. The event was attended by about 70 villagers.

#### **Items Funded this Year**

Up to the end of 2021 FOCC has provided £47,155.33 to support the toilet project. Of this, £16,439.42 was from FOCC’s reserves and the remainder was the money raised explicitly for the project.

### **Royal British Legion. Cottered Branch • John Harwood Bee (Branch Secretary)**

Although there are numerous Royal British Legion members in our community, it has been impossible to attract them to take branch office. Therefore, the Cottered Branch is in the process of becoming a County Managed branch. This will allow us to retain our standard, have our own Poppy Appeal collection and retain the branch identity. This initiative takes the management of the branch to County level whilst allowing it to remain autonomous. I shall remain as Poppy Appeal Coordinator, continue to be active in the organisation of the Remembrance Service and in the organisation of other fund-raising events.

I should like to thank all those who donated so generously last year when we were once again allowed to collect ‘Door to Door’. It was good to see you all in person.

### **The Children’s Society • 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. Last year we had 14 box holders. When the boxes were opened in October, we collected the sum of £220, which is a slight increase on the previous year.

#### **Christingle Service**

Because of COVID restrictions no Christingle service was held this year.